Capt. Porter and the Georgia Steamship—Sermons to his Passengers.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK HERALD.

I notice in the *Independent* some remarks reflect flag on me by a person who signs himself J. R., and who, I presume, is some unhappy and discontented person, who was not permitted to have the run of the Captain's room. Though I am not clothed with any ministerial attributes, the statement of a sailor will be received by quite as many as believe in the assertions of J. R. There are always two sides to a stery, and one looks very plausible until the other is told; and I hope to show that the whole article to which J. R. was ashamed to sign his name, bears the impress of untruth on the face of it.

To show how various are the opinions of gentlemen of the clergy with regard to my sincerity on religious matters, I beg leave to state that on my late trip to Chagres I received the public thanks of the clergyman from the pulpit (temporarily erected on the quarter deck of the Georgia), for the prompt manner with which I had acceded to their request, and the interest I had displayed in arranging the accommodations for passengers at Divine service, also for the order and decorum observed throughout the vessel during the voyage. I do not repeat this from any feeling of vanity, but merely to show that even holy preachers will sometimes differ in opinion.

Not desiring to come in under the head of "irreligious steamships," I will mention some facts that will refute, without further argument, all that has been said or written by the *Independent's* correspondent; though, perhaps, he may be a "divine," and if so, one who should not "bear false witness against his neighbor," and whose lips should never breathe anything but truth. I once commanded the steamship Panama during a voyage of fourteen thousand miles, and I showed my "dislike to religion" by having divine service performed every Sunday, with all due form and solemnity; and, moreover, since I have commanded the steamship Georgia, (over two years) I never have but on two occasions objected to the performance of religious service, and then my reasons were admitted to be good by the applicants. Though "J. R." may have curious notions about the rights of a captain to interfere with the religious enjoyments of the passengers, he has yet to learn that a captain is always the best judge, (at least, would be voted so by the majority of passengers) whether such matters interfere with the safety of the ship. On the occasion alluded to by J. R., there were 980 passengers on board the ship, and I gave as an answer to the application for religious service, that I did not think it safe to get up any meeting that would cause the passengers to assemble in any one part of the ship, as it might cause some great calamity; I also did say, that as there were clergymen on board of different denominations it would not be desirable (as our voyage only wanted two days of its termination) to create any ill feeling amongst them.

I did also make the remark that, as far as my experience went, that preaching was not generally desired amongst the passengers, and gave as a reason a circumstance that occurred on the previous voyage, which circumstance I will take this opportunity to relate:—

A person who formed companionship with two clergymen on board, came to me on Saturday, and asked me if I had any objection to his opening a faro bank in the social hall. I told him that I had great objections, and the principal objection was "that he should not do it." On the next day (Sunday) the same individual came to me, and asked me if I had any objection to having divine service. I replied "No," and remarked that I was glad to see him so much better employed than the day previous, though I had no faith in the parity of the applicant. In the middle of the service the preacher broke off from his discourse, and made use of offensive language to a knot of Californians, who, perhaps, indiscreetly allowed their thoughts to wander to the El Dorado of their visions, and were discussing together the hopes they entertained of realizing a golden harvest. I was not at all pleased with the spirit of the clergyman, and the passengers loudly declaimed against [illegible] preaching on board the ship. I make no comment on the abovementioned facts, nor do I make these explanations for fear of ecclesiastical displeasure, as I shall always do exactly what my judgment tells me is right, independent of any such influences. I merely state the above to show that it is not always the desire of passengers to have preaching on board the ship.

The *Independent's* correspondent asserts that "on all that Sunday" those so disposed were permitted, without restraint, to offend the eyes and ears of those "who wished to keep the Sabbath holy, by card-playing, firing of pistols, and singing ribald and licentious songs." What a field was herefor a Christian preacher to use his influence, and go about amongst the passengers to bring about a better state of things! To have converted one of these sinners would have been a greater merit in the eyes of Heaven than to have preached for hours to those already converted. But this statement of the *Independent's* correspondent from Panama, is as devoid of truth as he is of the principles he professes. It was universally remarked that we had a very orderly and moral set of passengers; seven hundred of them were men from the Eastern States, men of "steady habits;" and no such occurrence as playing cards on a Sunday ever occurred on board. Sunday is a dull day at sea, at all times, and perhaps in the evening "the beautiful weather," "cloudless sky" "and boundless ocean" "without a ripple," to which "J. R." so poetically alludes, induced the passengers to assemble in knots about the deck; the same influence may have induced them to indulge in singing "Old Uncle Ned," "Mary Blane" or "Lucy Neale"—beautiful melodies, which are sung nightly in New York by Christy's Minstrels to a moral and delighted audience, and I never before heard them libelled by being called "ribald or licentious." A moonlight night at sea it is a lovely and magnificent sight. If man ever had music in his soul, he would put forth his voice on such nights as one sees in the Carribean Sea; and as it is not every one who has the faculty of singing hymns and psalms, those who are deficient in that talent may, in a measure, be excused if they amuse themselves by singing "Old Dan Tucker," or "Lovely Nell"—songs that are purely national, and known to every little urchin who runs the streets. I know that, on such occasions, I have sometimes been so inspired myself, that I have, when asked to do so, sung "Billy Taylor," (the only song I ever knew,) to a much delighted audience. I disclaim all right to take charge of the morals of my passengers—especially would I not deprive them of an amusement that is so perfectly innocent, and tends to while away a tedious voyage, and imparts good feeling and hilarity amongst all on board; those who are fond of singing hymns and psalms, are also permitted to indulge to their hearts' content.

With regard to the firing of pistols, it is a little weakness peculiar to all Californians, who are anxious to know if their pistols will go off, and many of them never having owned one before, are like children, "amused with a rattle and tickled with a straw." I have, all my life, been so accustomed to exercising and firing of guns and pistols, on every day of the week, that the immorality of the proceeding never struck me so forcibly before, especially among men bound on a perilous journey across the Isthmus of Panama, which is known to be infected with monkeys of large stature and savage disposition, and it is natural for men, in the face of such danger, to get their arms ready for use. Had the correspondent of the *Independent* objected to the working of the engine on Sunday, no doubt it would appear equally as sinful.

I am represented as having asked Gen. Foote (who is styled by the *Independent's* correspondent "as a violent political partizan,") to make a political speech on the occasion alluded to, but that Gen. Foote declined out of regard to the feelings of political opponents. This, I suppose, is introduced to show that my political bias is stronger than my religious feelings, and that I would encourage the one, and not the other. Gen. Foote is a refined gentleman, and was my guest. In the school wherein I have been educated, I have fortunately learnt enough of polite manners to know that such a request, made by so young a man as myself to a grave Senator, would have been a great breach of good manners; Gen. Foote can fortunately pronounce the assertion of "J. R." to be as devoid of truth as the other portions of his letter.

I would ask, does the fourth paragraph of the *Independent's* correspondent sound like the sentiments of a religious or christian man? Is it not rather the feeling of some bitter fanatic, who would send all mankind to hell who did not fall at once into his way of thinking, and who can see no sense, or reason, in any argument that does not coincide with his opinion? Is he not one who would deride the precautions taken by a Captain for the safety and security of his passengers, but be the first to get hold of his coat tail in time of danger? what salutary or lasting lessons could a sermon preached by such a man effect with a crowd of passengers such as he termed ungodly and licentious? Religion must come clothed in pleasing and agreeable garments, if it would possess any efficacy; and truth—the most Godlike quality that man has ever received from his Creator—must sit enthroned upon its brow, pure and unspotted as the Ko-hi-noor diamond. There are five paragraphs of untrue matter in the letter of J. R.

I am described as a man "who hates God and his truth." Now, does not this sound like the ranting of some fanatic itinerant preacher? Forsooth, because a captain won't have his decks and skylights broken in, and his boats rendered unfit for use by a crowd of nearly one thousand people desirous of hearing themselves all doomed to perdition, "he hates God and his truth." I am sure he would deserve a much greater censure if, by having his judgment overruled, he allowed an accident to occur, and permitted so many souls to be called to their final account, even though they might be drinking in at the time of their destruction the inspired words of the *Independent's* correspondent. The Georgia has been running to Chagres for more than two years, and in that time has conveyed over eighteen thousand passengers, without a single accident to man, woman, or child; and my confidence in the regulations and precautions for the security of passengers has been in no way impaired by anything your correspondent has written.

In conclusion, "J. R." would like to know "what the feelings of Capt. Porter will be, when he meets at God's tribunal some of the unfortunates who died after leaving the ship, and who may now be in hell for want of hearing that sermon." In the first place, I shall congratulate myself that I had no hand in putting them there, through any want of precaution on my part; and in the second place, I have a more abiding confidence in God and his attributes, than to suppose he would send a soul to hell for having missed a single sermon—and that, perhaps, a poor one. My idea of God is that of a merciful Being, who looks with leniency and compassion on all the frail mortals of his creation; and my confidence in his mercy is so great that I even think that your correspondent "J. R." will be forgiven, if he only learns to speak the truth. In the raging tempest, with the sea threatening to engulf me every minute, I have never felt afraid, though expecting, at every surge, to appear in his presence. I cannot say that I have seen those of a holier calling than myself appear free from fear, under like circumstances.

I am, Mr. Editor, &c. D. D. PORTER.

Celebration of Colored Lodges.

NEW YORK, March 13, 1852.

MR. EDITOR:—

In coming down Wooster street, on the evening of the 10th inst., my attention was drawn to a large procession of colored persons bedecked in the paraphernalia of Masons, entering Convention Hall, and upon inquiry, I learned that it was a Lodge of Free Masons about to celebrate their first anniversary, and from the decorum that was manifested throughout their ranks, and the promptings of curiosity, I was induced to purchase a ticket in order to see their further proceedings.

Upon entering the door their circular was placed in my hand, which was headed—"A Grand Masonic Festival—The First Anniversary of Covenant Lodge No. 7, A. Y. M., will be held at Convention Hall, Wooster street," &c., with a programme of exercises. The speech was from their Grand Master, who acquitted himself with credit. Then there was the reading of by-laws, the presentation of a Bible, &c.

But the great feature of the evening was the presentation of a silver medal, (which, from its size and apparent workmanship, was of some intrinsic value,) to J. W. Smith, D. D. N. G. M. for the Northern district. This medal was made, I learn, by a silversmith of their own color, E. V. Clark, Canal street. It was presented by Edward Crosby, P. M., in behalf of the Lodge, prefacing the presentation with quite a neat and elegant address, which was responded to in a like manner by Dr. J. W. Smith. The exercises were enlivened, at intervals, with appropriate music, by a band, under the direction of Wm. R. Jackson; also, a person of color; and I was struck with surprise to learn that there was so many Masons of color in this city.

There were present on this occasion seven Lodges, named Hiram Lodge, No. 1; Celestial, No. 2; Meridian, No. 3; King Solomon, No. 4; Eureka, No. 5; Union, No. 6; Covenant, No, 7; making seven in all, subordinate, with their Grand Lodge, numbering about 250 members. After the speechifying, a procession was formed—the Covenant Lodge taking the lead, followed by the others, and the rear brought up by the Grand Lodge. Upon a signal being given the band struck up a stirring air, the body marched with great order several times around the room. The company were then conducted to another apartment, where a splendid supper of the good things appreciated by epicures, was waiting dental discussion. The table was tastefully decorated, and loaded with the choicest luxuries of the season. The side dishes were beautifully ornamented, and the culinary unique. There was, indeed, a profusion of the most palatable viands—fish, fowls, game, creams, jellies, cakes, fruits, &c. The company were seated without confusion, Covenant Lodge acted as attendants upon their guests, and from the luxuriant supplies I received at their hands, they must have taken me for a member of the press.

The supper was provided under the superintendence of Mr. Clark, the public caterer, which, for its excellent quality, taste, and beauty of arrangements, I offer Mr. Clark no small compliment if I say that the renowned Downing must look well to his long worn laurels.

After having satisfied myself that the culinary process was as pleasing to the palate as their appearance was to the eye, I returned to the hall, and found the young gents tripping it upon the light fantastic toe with the belles of the company. It being late, I retired from the hall, feeling convinced in my own mind that the whole affair was conducted with such decorum, propriety and order, that you would fail to detect a cause for complaint; and from what I saw and heard, will lead me to seek after that mystic tie that binds them with such unanimity of feeling, impulses and sympathies. My wish is that they may ever practice the philanthropy and benevolence their by-laws specify; and should they ever have such an assemblage again, I shall endeavor to be present.

Although being of an opposite hue, I expect, from the courtesy manifested on this occasion, a like treatment at any future time. AN OBSERVER.

Terrible and Fatal Explosion at Trenton, New Jersey.

On Wednesday night, the 24th instant, about one o'clock, a steam boiler in the drying room of the extensive paper manufactory of Messrs. Demar, Mein & Kay, at Trenton, exploded with terrific and fatal violence. The boiler was a large one, and was used for cleansing rags, containing water, which was heated by steam from the main boiler. Through some defect of the castings or fastenings, the head blew off, and the boiler was thrown backward about thirty feet, piercing a brick wall and destroying everything near it. A portion of the factory about forty feet long, twenty feet wide, and two stories high, was shattered into fragments, and the bricks and timbers scattered in every direction to a considerable distance. A number of workmen were in the building at the time one of whom was killed immediately, and another severely wounded, by the rushing steam and falling timbers. Had the explosion occurred during the day, a large loss of life would have been inevitable.—The *Trenton American* gives the following account of the disaster:—

Attached to the main building, which is four stories high, are two brick buildings, one in the rear of the other, one story high, and together about 170 feet long. In the front building are two machines for the manufacture of paper. The rear building was a sort of depository of articles of various kinds. Between these two buildings, in a space of about 20 feet, the boiler was erected, enclosed in a building by itself. The boiler was 12 feet long, and six feet in diameter. It had been in operation only about one week—having first been used yesterday week. The head of the boiler was blown off, and carried a distance of about thirty feet, passing in its course through a brick wall, 13 inches thick, and destroying, in its course, a machine worth between $4,000 and $5,000, and injuring another machine in the same room very considerably. The boiler was carried in an opposite direction about twenty feet, and also passed through a brick wall about thirteen inches thick, carrying in its course the first girder and sticking fast in the second and shattering it considerably. The south walls of both buildings were so materially injured that it will be necessary to re-build them. The whole premises, except the front part of the building, present the appearance of a general wreck. The eves of the four story building immediately above the boiler, were also shattered slightly. So much for the buildings. There were about twenty-five persons at work in the mill at the time. A little circumstance occurred, which, providentially, was the cause of saving many lives. A piece of timber had got between the breast and water wheel, and a number of hands were in the north part of the mill fixing the wheel. The explosion took place a few minutes after the circumstance occurred. There were in the machine room at the time, Mr. Mein, Thomas Stratton, James Harper, Daniel McCarter, Michael McCardell, Thomas Foley, and a grandson of Mr. Duer. Daniel McCarter was assistant engineer, and belonged to another part of the building. He had stepped into the rag boiler room, it is supposed, to warm himself. He had just got into the room when the explosion took place. He was instantly killed, and found among the rubbish, very much disfigured, about eight feet from the boiler. He leaves a family. Mr. Mein had his head injured by some flying timber. James Harper was about midway in the machine room. He was carried to the east end of the room without receiving any other hurt a slight injury in the back and arm. Michael McCardell, whose business it was to tend the rag boiler, was blown through the window on the south side. He was pretty badly hurt in the back. Thomas Foley was also about midway in the room. He was knocked down, and when found was almost exhausted. He was pretty badly hurt. Thomas Stratton was at the east end of the room. He was prostrated by the flying timbers, and almost suffocated to death. At one time he despaired of all hopes of life. He got out, however, with a cut on the head. The grandson of Mr. Duer was eating a lunch at the time. The lunch was carried away, and he escaped with a slight injury on the hand. The cause of the explosion is attributed to some defect in the mechanical construction of the boiler. The rivets at the head are said to have been too close together, and not constructed, according to the opinions of some present, in a proper and substantial manner. The proprietors are enterprising, hard-working men, and will sustain a heavy loss, probably reaching the neighborhood of $10,000.

FIRE IN WOODSTOCK, CANADA WEST.—The Woodstock Hotel, kept by Mr. Matson, at Woodstock, Canada West, was burned to the ground on the 15th instant. The flames extended to the stables and other out buildings, containing hay, straw, and 3,000 bushels of oats, all of which were destroyed. A large number of horses, including twenty belonging to the stage proprietor, were saved. From these out buildings the fire extended to two warehouses and the lecture room of the Episcopal church, all of which were burned. The church was saved with much difficulty, after having been on fire for some time. The fire broke out between three and four o'clock in the morning, and at a time when the hotel was filled with boarders and travellers. Woodstock is on the great western road from Hamilton to London, about midway.

TWENTY-FOUR CHILDREN IN NINE YEARS.—A woman at Liege, in Belgium, was lately delivered of three children, making twenty-four in nine years. She had [illegible] each time.

Literary Notices.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS.—We observe an elaborate report, by the Secretary of War, (January, 1852,) in reference to the inundations of the Mississippi river; also, the estimates for the improvement of Goat Island, in Newport harbor, and for marking the northern boundary of Iowa; and a letter (February 2, 1852,) from the Commissioner under the convention with Brazil, stating the obstacles which have impeded the conclusion of the business of that commission; also a bill by Mr. Houston, chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, making appropriations for the support of the army for the year ending June 30, 1853; and a bill amending the Texas boundary act.

GODEY'S LADY'S MAGAZINE, April, 1852. Philadelphia: Godey.—Among the principal articles in this tasteful and well adapted periodical, are "James Watt, Improver of the Steam Engine," which will initiate the fair sex, in a familiar and easy manner, into the mysteries of the great modern revolutionizer—the steam engine. "The Campbell's and the Clifton's," is charmingly wrote. "Men's Rights Convention" is a humorous sketch, and will be thoroughly appreciated by the ladies. The present number is filled with elegant poetical compositions; and the fashions and the miscellany are well attended to. The engravings are fine.

THE REPUBLIC MAGAZINE. March, 1852. New York: Whitney.—This periodical is of a promising character. The contributions are entertaining. There is room, however, for enlargement and improvement.

A RHYMING, SPELLING, AND PRONOUNCING DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. By J. Walker. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blackiston.—Mr. Walker possesses a fortunate name for the publication of a dictionary. The words are arranged according to the sound of the syliables, and to doggrel writers must be of great value; but to the public, either professional or commercial, it will be of less practical assistance than an ordinary dictionary.

BOOKS RECEIVED.—"Philadelphia in 1776;" "Report of the Labors of John Augustus;" "Homeopathy and Allopathy;" "Children, their Hydropathic Management in Health and Disease;" "The Irish Melodies;" "Report of the Congressional Banquet in Honor of Washington;" "Poor Jack," by Marryatt; "The Swamp Steed;" "The Greek Girl;" "Hand Book of Wines;" "The Dying Exile," a musical composition; "Lodge's Portraits;" "The Naval Institutions of a Republic.

The Virginia Democratic Convention.

[From the Richmond, Va., Times, March 25.]

The Democratic State Convention met at the African church, in this city, yesterday at eleven o'clock. Mr. Cox, of Chesterfield, was called to the chair, temporarily, and Messrs. William F. Ritchie, J. M. Daniel, and —— Brunet, were appointed secretaries.

The proceedings of the assembled democracy were signalized on the threshold by a fierce and boisterous struggle between "old fogyism" and "Young America." Mr. Wise, the champion of the first mentioned wing of the party, offered a resolution to the effect that a committee, consisting of one from each Congressional district, be appointed by the delegations from the respective districts, to nominate the permanent officers of the convention.

The young democracy, for reasons best known to themselves, regarded this move as an attempt to stock the cards in favor of Mr. Buchanan; and, accordingly, Mr. Claiborne, of Franklin, who is understood to be a warm partizan of Mr. Douglas, offered an amendment, the object of which was to leave the appointment of the committee on organization in the hands of the temporary chairman, and not as proposed by Mr. Wise, in the hands of the delegations from the Congressional districts. The question was distinctly understood to involve an issue between the old and the young democracy, or, in other words, between Messrs. Buchanan and Douglas, and accordingly a spicy discussion ensued between Messrs. Wise and Claiborne, their respective champions. The convention adjourned over until 4, o'clock without coming to a vote on the question.

At that hour the discussion was resumed, and carried on amidst great excitement and no little confusion. It was argued by Young America that the adoption of Mr. Wise's resolution would be a departure from the time-honored usages of the democratic party, and would convey a reflection upon the temporary chairman. Old fogyism disclaimed any intention to reflect upon the chairman, but contended that it was but right and proper that the democracy from every part of the State should be represented in the appointment of the committee on organization.

MR. RANDOLPH, of Albemarle, begged Mr. Claiborne to withdraw his amendment, which might lead to mischief, but could not possibly be productive of any good. Already there were diversities of opinion in the party, which would ultimately lead to serious dissensions, unless the convention, in its incipient stage, proceeded with great caution. One false step at this critical period, might lead to difficulties which could not hereafter be repaired.

Governor FLOYD opposed the resolution of Mr. Wise, and supported the amendment offered by Mr. Claiborne. He was decidedly opposed to departing from the time honored usages of the party, by pursuing the course contemplated by the resolution of Mr. Wise; and while he favored the amendment of Mr. Claiborne, it was due to justice to say that he did so not because of any distrust in the fairness of the chairman. He could say to him, as St. Paul said to Alexander, the coppersmith, "You have done me some harm, the Lord reward you according to your deserts."

Gov. FLOYD was interrupted in the course of his remarks by Mr. Wise, and a somewhat angry altercation ensued between those gentlemen, accompanied with great excitement among the members of the convention. This storm had no sooner blown over than another tempest was raised by Mr. Rives, of Prince George, who made a vehement assault upon the member from Accomac. He said, that when he saw the gentleman from Accomac offering resolutions professing to have in view the interest of the democratic party, his mind reverted to the time when the youthful vigor of Mr. Wise was employed in Congress to thwart the measures of Andrew Jackson, and to bring defeat and disgrace upon his administration. The gentleman now claims to be an ardent democrat; yet, when a motion was pending in Congress to investigate the affairs of the United States Bank, the gentleman opposed it with all his might, and made every effort in his power to screen from scrutiny the affairs of this monster of corruption.

Mr. WISE retorted with his usual spirit, denying that he had ever sought to screen the affairs of the bank from scrutiny. He had quit the administration of Andrew Jackson because Martin Van Buren, the enemy of the South, was the favorite of that administration. His object was to purify the democracy of such men as Van Buren, and he had the satisfaction of knowing that his object had been attained.

Mr. RIVES—Then, sir, if that was your motive for leaving the party, I ask with what consistency or propriety you could afterwards support General Harrison, the nominee of the Harrisburg Convention, who obtained the nomination over Mr. Clay mainly by the influence of abolition votes, the entire delegation of the South having voted for Mr. Clay?

Here a scene of indescribable confusion arose. The democracy, apparently aware of the unseemly spectacle they presented to the "outside barbarians" of the whig party, who thronged the galleries, determined to put a stop to the discussion at all hazards, and, accordingly, the voice of the intrepid orator from Prince George was drowned amid the deafening cries of question, question, question! The vote was taken on Mr. Claiborne's amendment, late in the evening, by ayes and noes, but the result will not be announced until the meeting of the convention to-day.

[From the Richmond Enquirer, March 25.]

The Democratic State Convention assembled in the African Church yesterday. It is the largest and among the most enlightened political conventions we have ever seen in Virginia. One hundred and thirty-two counties, &c., were represented by five hundred and forty-eight delegates, leaving only fourteen counties in the State unrepresented. In talent, energy and enthusiasm, it may well compare with any similar body we have ever attended. The wisdom and experience of age, the fire and zeal of youth, have been convoked from the mountains and the low lands, to the great Sanhedrim of the party, to renew their vows of fidelity to the consecrated principles of Virginia. The spectacle was a most striking one, and Virginia may well feel proud of such champions of her faith.

Strange to say, after a long and animated discussion, and two protracted sessions, the convention is not yet organized. A struggle took place upon the preliminary question of appointing the Committee of Organization, and that question is not yet settled. Many eloquent and impassioned speeches were delivered, embracing allusions to the propriety of expressing the preference of the convention for Presidential candidates, to the claims of the latter, though no names were called, and to the consistency of leading members of the democratic party of the State, and some hard, but good natured, hits were given and received. We regretted to see past events and criticisms of present members of the party lugged into the discussion. If the democracy of Virginia—invincible when united—desire to maintain their predominance, they must let by-gones be by-gones, and unite upon their old maxim of "principles, not men." We warn them that the whigs would prefer nothing better than a continuation of the excited debate of yesterday. Let us disappoint their darling hopes, and continue and complete the proceedings of this convention with the harmony, conciliatory spirit, union, and enthusiasm, that have always characterized the democratic conventions of Virginia. We cannot but believe that the discharge of steam, which was let off yesterday, and which is more or less to be expected in so large a popular body, will have a salutary effect in inciting members to their high and solemn duties, and that hereafter the convention will proceed promptly, regularly, and successfully in completing the great work before it.

The Floods.

We continue to receive accounts of floods and damage by ice on the streams at the North. The small streams are swollen to a great volume, and many bridges have been swept away, and much damage has been done at the villages and mill sites.

An extra from the office of the *Paris* (Canada West) *Star*, dated March 15, says:—

It is our painful duty to record a great loss of property by the ice and floods on the Grand river, at this village; so great a flood as the present has not occurred since the year 1833. A rapid thaw set in on Thursday last, accompanied with heavy rain on Friday and Saturday. Yesterday morning the river began to rise rapidly, and by three o'clock P.M., it was fifteen feet above its usual height, and flooded the lower village, filling the cellars from eight to ten feet. The bridges, however, stood the immense body of ice and water nobly, being of very great strength, till about half past four o'clock, when a bridge about three miles above the village, known as Philips' Bridge, gave way and came down the river with great force, together with a large quantity of ice and water, and struck the lower village bridge, the centre of which gave way to the immense weight, and two arches, about eighty to ninety feet long, were carried away and floated down the river, at a rate of fully ten miles an hour. The upper village bridge, over which the Paris and Dundas road passes, shared a worse fate. The ice broke against the eastern section and carried away the trestles supporting it, when that section fell in, and was carried down the stream. Shortly after, before 5 o'clock, Phillips' bridge passed under the western section of this bridge without causing any damage; and in a few minutes after, the two arches of the lower village bridge came down and struck the Western section with irresistible force, and carried it away, sweeping trees, rails, fences, and everything else before it. This bridge was between 300 and 400 feet long. The loss of property by this flood will be immense. The damage done to these two bridges amounts to about $5,000, $3,000 of which will fall on the Paris and Dundas Road Company by the loss of the lower village bridge, over which that road passes. Private individuals have suffered greatly by the loss of lumber, fences, &c. Mr. Robert Rosebrook had 13 sheep carried away from his enclosure. We have not heard positively of any loss of life. Cries were heard just after the bridge gave way, but whether they proceeded from the other side, or from some unfortunate person on the ice, could not be ascertained, as it was impossible to see across the river, in consequence of a dense fog. Two young ladies, of the name of Rosebrook, were in great danger; they were looking at the flood, and in consequence of the breakage of a bank they were suddenly surrounded by water, and had it not been for the timely exertions of two gentlemen, who fortunately noticed their situation, they would in a few minutes have met with an untimely death, as the ice and water covered the spot on which they were standing many feet deep. A house, also, belonging to a party by the name of Hillier, was moved off its foundation, and greatly damaged; the family were fortunate enough to escape. The scene on the upper village flats this morning, was one of great desolation. The river had covered the flats, and had receded to its ordinary channel, but has left the group literally covered for two miles with ice in large sheets from two to three feet in thickness. The timbers of the three bridges lay scattered about, and also an immense quantity of lumber, rails, fences, gates, &c. &c.

The Albany *Evening Journal* of the 20th, says:—The ice barrier formed between Castleton and Hudson is considered more formidable than was represented to us yesterday. In order to ascertain the extent of the obstruction, a person was despatched by a forwarding house to make a thorough examination, with a view of getting a corrected report. It appears that the most formidable barrier is between Kinderhook and Coeymans, where the ice lodged during the freshet in December last, and the great bulk which passed down during this week made it more formidable. Without a warm rain, navigation will be obstructed several days. It is the opinion of many that eight or ten warm days might make a sufficient impression on the ice to enable a boat to cut through the heaviest and now most formidable barrier. There was considerable newly formed floating ice in the river opposite to this city this morning, but not of sufficient magnitude to obstruct the running of the ferry boats. The Greenbush and Bath boats were in motion, as were also the two railroad boats, the Olcott and Essex. There was some stir along the docks and pier this morning, but as yet there is but little movement among the forwarders. Several river barges are being loaded with grain, and we noticed on some of the Eastern vessels men engaged in stretching canvass, and putting them in trim for business. The steam tugs are being put in running order, and most of them are undergoing extensive repairs.

THE WIND AND FRESHET AT THE WEST.—The *Louisville Democrat* of the 15th inst., gives an account of the damage accomplished by the late storm in that neighborhood. The mass of ice in its descent of the river on Saturday night, accumulated at the bridges, and the draws were opened on Sunday morning for their relief, but the drifting mass and the strong current prevented their being closed again for several hours, and communication between the two portions of the city was entirely interrupted in consequence, and the citizens of the west side were prevented from attending morning service in the churches on the east side. The river has risen to a height it seldom reaches, and the cellars and lumber yards adjacent on each side are flooded. We learn that several hundred barrels of flour stored on the water power were damaged by the rise of the water. Also, that the bluff at the east end of the large dam across the river just above the canal, has been washed into and much damage done, which it will take several days to repair. The new Humboldt bridge, three miles above this city, has been carried away. The several plank roads leading from the city have been somewhat injured. It is, however, "an ill wind that blows nobody any good," and by the breaking up of the ice in the harbor and along the shore, the opening of navigation will be materially hastened.

Theatrical and Musical.

BOWERY THEATRE.—Three excellent pieces are announced by that indefatigable manager, Thos. S. Hamblin. This theatre is nightly visited by hundreds, who always retire with feelings of pleasure after witnessing the performances. To-night he presents three fine pieces. The first is the comedy of the "Jacobite," which will be followed by the new drama entitled "Fiends in Human Form," and the entertainments will conclude with the farce of "Friendly Feuds." The artists engaged at this establishment are all persons of great dramatic ability, and hence the great success which has crowned the efforts of Hamblin.

BROADWAY THEATRE.—The great American tragedian, Mr. Forrest, appears this evening in his great character of "Jack Cade." There can be little doubt but that the house will be crowded in every department, as this is one of his best characters. He will be assisted in the other leading characters by Messrs. Barry, Fenno, Madam Ponisi, and Miss Crocker. The concluding piece will be the farce of "My Precious Betsey," in which Davidge, an actor of great celebrity, will appear in the principal part. The Broadway was never more successful than at the present period.

BURTON'S THEATRE.—This neat and well conducted establishment is every night filled by highly respectable audiences. This is by no means surprising, as the pieces are all light and highly amusing, and the artists engaged by Burton are all men of great dramatic celebrity. The entertainments announced for this evening are the very popular and excellent comedy of "Dombey & Son," and the amusing piece entitled the "First Night"—Messrs. Burton, Lester, Dyott, Johnson, Mrs. Hughes, Mary Taylor, and Miss Weston, in the principal characters.

NIBLO'S GARDEN.—The excellent opera of the "Child of the Regiment" is announced for Monday evening. Madame Anna Thillon, assisted by Mr. Hudson, Mr. Leach and Mrs. M'Kenna, formerly Miss Milton, whose singing is much admired, will appear in the principal characters. The concluding piece will be the farce of the "Captain of the Watch," in which Mr. Hudson and Miss Julia Daly will sustain the leading characters.

NATIONAL THEATRE.—The very popular drama entitled "Nick of the Woods" and the "Female Highwayman," together with the laughable farce of the "Bath Bun," will form the entertainment to be given at this favorite theatre this evening. Nearly all the leading members of the company will be embodied in the casts. Those who wish to enjoy a rich performance, can do so by visiting the National to-night.

BARNUM'S MUSEUM.—The beautiful oriental spectacle of "Cherry and Fair Star" is to be represented both this afternoon and evening, in the lecture room of this popular establishment. The cast embraces all the principal members of the company.

BOWERY CIRCUS continues to attract and delight very large assemblages. The programme provided for this evening is of an unusually attractive character, being for the annual benefit of Lewis Maire, the favorite dancer of this company.

WOOD'S MINSTRELS.—This band continues to be well sustained by the public. The amusements announced for this afternoon and evening, comprise vocal and instrumental pieces, burlesques, dancing, and witticisms.

BOWERY CIRCUS.—This establishment continues to be well patronized, and the performances create the utmost delight and satisfaction. The equestrian performance offered for this afternoon and evening, will embody the entire company of Sands & Co.

MR. A. H. PURDY, the enterprising manager of the National theatre, of this city, is, we understand, about taking the Arch street theatre, Philadelphia. Mr. Purdy's tact and experience in theatricals are a sure guarantee for his success at the Arch.

ATTENTIONS TO LOLA MONTES.—Yesterday the Countess of Landsfeldt, by invitation, visited the Grand Lodge rooms of the Free Masons at the Masonic Temple. She also visited the Boston Atheneum, at which place she was presented to many of our first citizens. To-day she will visit the prominent public schools, by invitation of the principals. Before her departure from the city, she will likewise visit the public institutions at South Boston, as she has expressed a great desire to see these model institutions. Attentions crowd upon her.—*Boston Bee*, 25th.

It appears from the following statements which are made in private correspondence from San Francisco, that the theatrical profession is not the best paid in California. An extract from a letter dated San Francisco, February 13th, says:—"The theatres are comparatively deserted; those actors who are on the way will curse the country, and long for home. The country is now poor, and a dollar looks as large here as it does in Boston; many are working for their board and lodging. The theatres are not doing a paying business."

Another letter contains the following paragraph:—"There is no more chance for actors or actresses to make money here; it is all over; they would do better to stay where they are. There are only two theatres open now. Fancies are cut down, and theatres are going down. The actical excitement is all over. People are getting prudent, and take care of their money. There are many people out of engagements here."

COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS.

MONEY MARKET.

FRIDAY, March 26—6 P. M.

There was a more active demand for the leading fancies at the first board to-day, and better prices were obtained. The most prominent fancy on the list at this moment is Nicaragua Transit stock, which has advanced lately more rapidly than any other. A few weeks ago the market price was about twenty. Sales have since been made at fifty. It is said that a dividend of three or four per cent will be paid in May next. There appears to be a good number of shares in the market, and the sellers have no doubt as great a desire to get rid of the stock as other parties have to purchase. The advance has been too rapid and too great to be sustained, and we must look for reactions, which will enable some of those who have sold at high prices to come in again, if they wish, at a depreciation. The advance to-day at the first board was four cent. Erie Railroad was moderately buoyant to-day, notwithstanding the hammering from the bears; an improvement of ⅛ per cent was realized. Norwich and Worcester went up ½ per cent; Harlem ¼; Morris Canal ⅛; Canton Company ¼. Reading Railroad declined ¼ per cent; Edgeworth ⅛; Hudson Railroad ¼; Portsmouth ⅛.

The receipts at the office of the Assistant Treasurer of this port to-day, amounted to $83,102; payments, $190,352 22—balance, $2,533,642 75.

Books of subscription to the stock of the Building Associations' Fire Insurance Company, with a capital of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, are open at the Mercantile Bank, where payments of the first and second instalments will be received. Books of subscription to the stock of the Hanover Insurance Company are open at the Hanover Bank.

A new counterfeit ten dollar note, purporting to be issued by the Merchants' Bank of Norwich, Connecticut, is in circulation. Its general appearance is bad. On one end of the note is the word Ten in large letters. On the other is a female figure, holding in one hand a shield, and in the other a long lance, while at her feet is a harp. The vignette is a figure seated on the sea shore, with a ship approaching under full sale. On either side of the vignette is the figure 10. Purports to be engraved by Harris & Scaley, New York.

The earnings of the Norwich and Worcester Railroad for the month of February, show a gain over those for the same period of the previous year, as follows:—February, 1852, $18,636 39; February, 1851, $16,500 59—gain, $2,035 80.

One of the trustees of the Bank of Illinois gives the following information to creditors of that institution, which may be of service to those interested:—

From an examination of the books and resources of the bank, I am satisfied that future collections will be made in notes, certificates and real estate; and that the final dividend among the creditors will be the result of sales of the real estate which may remain after the collections are completed. The real estate, if sold at fair prices, in connection with the other resources of the bank, is sufficient to meet the claims of bill and certificate holders; yet, unless the creditors become purchasers the property will be sacrificed. I therefore suggest to the creditors, that by attending sales under decrees and judgments, and becoming purchasers, many of them may realize the amount of their claims, without the delay and detentions which must result from purchases and re-sales by the trustee. Creditors desiring to avail themselves of this notice, will be furnished with all the information necessary to enable them to do so, by application to Mr. Joseph Bowls, of Shawneetown, or H. T. Mudd, at Lawrenceville, Illinois.

The institution referred to above is not the State Bank of Illinois.

The Water Loan of the city of Albany, for $150,000, was taken at the following rates:—

$35,000 to John H. Contoit			108
$15,000 to Winslow, Lanier, & Co			103.55
$25,000	do	do	103.75
$25,000	do	do	104.15
$25,000	do	do	103.15
$25,000 to John J. Palmer			103.17

The cause of the late advance in the stock of the Boston and Providence road, is attributed to the large gain in the months of January and February over the same months in 1851. Last year the road earned 6½ per cent net. It is supposed by some that the "Mansfield Coal and Mining Company" will soon be of great advantage to this road. The coal improves with the depth of the pit (now between 170 and 180 feet) and the quantity seems to be inexhaustible. It is stated that a branch road is to be soon built, to run from the mines to the railroad.

The quarterly interest on the currency debt of Maryland, due on the first of April, will be paid at the Chesapeake Bank, Baltimore. The General Appropriation bill, in which this interest is provided for, has not yet passed the lower house of the Legislature of that State. Whether it passes before the first of April or not, the interest will be paid on that day.

The Susquehanna and Tide Water canals are now in fine navigable order. Sixteen boats passed down on the 22d instant—twelve bound to this city, two to Philadelphia, and two to Baltimore. The breach in the Juniata canal has been repaired, and several boats have arrived at Columbia, from the West.

The following official notice of the temporary suspension of duties upon importations of breadstuff