MILITARY COURT OF INQUIRY

RELATIVE TO THE

LOSS OF THE STEAMSHIP SAN FRANCISCO.

SEVENTH DAY.

The court met this morning pursuant to adjournment. All the members were present, together with Col. Gates and his counsel Capt. Shields.

The record of the preceding day was read, as usual.

Capt Gardiner desired to offer a correction of his testimony. He had said that Col. Gates had left the Kilby, and went to the Lucy Thompson in the first boat. It was the first boat he saw; but he has learned that he was in error in supposing it the first boat that went; it was the second. He also desired to explain that the meat ration continued after the biscuit ration was reduced from one biscuit to half a biscuit a day, and continued to the end, while he (Capt. G.) remained on the Kilby.

The examination of Major Wyse was resumed. The Major continued his testimony in reference to the conduct of Col. Gates, and concluded his account of the circumstances connected with the wreck, commenced in the Sunday HERALD. He said—On the 24th of December, 1853, up to the 28th of that month, Col. Gates neglected to have proper military details for baling the ship and lightening the wreck; he also failed to take that interest in the safety and comfort of his men which becomes a commander under such circumstances; had he been a citizen passenger he could not have taken less interest in that command than he appeared to do.

The Court—The witness ought to enumerate instances of neglect.

Witness—I cannot enumerate instances of neglect, when I did not see a single particle of duty done; I had an ample opportunity of seeing it done; on the 28th of December, when about to disembark the command, Capt. Watkins came into the cabin and reported to Col Gates that the bark Kilby was nearing us, and the condition of the wreck was such that he wished to get all the passengers off as soon as it could be done; Col. Gates neglected then to direct his quartermaster in getting out water and provisions from the hold of the ship, and transferring them to the bark Kilby; he also neglected to have a thorough inspection of his command made by the medical officer, to have the sick and invalids brought on the quarter deck, where they might be transferred to the Kilby, he also neglected to retain Capt Judd on board the wreck, at a time when he commanded a detachment of two companies of raw recruits, which rendered his presence on the wreck extremely essential; he neglected to retain on the wreck Lieut. Murray, Lieut Lozier, and Assistant Surgeon Dr. Wirtz; he also neglected to inform the next senior who was left on board the wreck, that he was about to leave the ship, nor did he turn over to that officer one single word of instruction, or an express ion in reference to the command; at this time there were two companies of recruits without a commissioned officer; both companies A and K were without a commissioned officer, they having been washed overboard on the morning of the 24th; also, company I was without a commanding officer, Capt. Col. Burke being entirely disabled and unfit for duty; after the wreck five companies mostly recruits, without a single commissioned officer with them; the officers left behind on the wreck were Lieut. W. A. Winder, Lieut. C. S. Winder, Lieut. Chandler, and myself, with about 325 rank and file, and quite a number of camp women, including the wives and children of soldiers; in consequence of the few officers on the wreck, and the severe labor which they had to perform after the Kilby parted with us, and the inconvenience they had to suffer, it was almost impossible for the few officers to take that care of them which in a military way ought to have been given; I have mentioned this because I consider it a serious neglect of duty on the part of Col. Gates.

Q What officer for duty could he have left? A. He could have left Capt Judd, Lieut Fremont, and Lieut. Lozier.

Q Does the Regimental Quartermaster do any company duty?

Witness—Do you mean at that time?

Judge Advocate—I mean at any time.

Witness—Under the circumstances in which we were place the Regimental Quartermaster and Commissary should have been available for any duty which might devolve upon a commissioned officer; in this case their staff duties required them to be on the wreck, and not on the Kilby.

Q You say you had no orders from Col. Gates while on the San Francisco except through Capt Judd; had you any from him on the Kilby? A. In the first boat that returned to the wreck after the one which carried Col. Gates from it to the Kilby, a message was received through the coxswain from Col. Gates, saying that the Colonel had forgotten a pot of preserves, which he wished sent on board for his children.

The Court decided that this answer should be stricken from the records.

Q. When and how did Col. Gates leave the wreck? A. I did not see him go over the stern of the vessel; I saw him in the boat when it was leaving the wreck; I think it was the first boat used in transferring passengers.

Q. How many boats after that returned to the wreck? A. There were about ten return trips made.

By the Court—The witness has spoken of the great number of men left on board the wreck compared with the small number of officers, whose names he has given. He will give the conduct of those officers from the time of the wreck up to the time of the transfer to other vessels. A. The conduct of Lieut Charles S. Winder, Lieut. James Van Voast, and Lieut A. G. Chandler, was noble in the highest degree, and I confidently believe that their untiring exertions in superintending and encouraging the men to bale, under the most unfavorable circumstances, saved the wreck from going to the bottom. Lieut. William A. Winder was on the wreck with me, but was sick and could do very little duty.

Q. Were there any excesses committed by the men in eating, or drinking ardent spirits, and eating improper food on the wreck? A. I saw but one instance of intoxication—a private of Company A, who was placed under charge of the guards; I am not prepared to say whether there was any excesses in eating; I do not know that there was any; there was a good deal of imprudence, however, in eating sour crout and drinking molasses and water, when the men returned from the engine room very much heated; the temperature of the engine room down below, where they had to bale, was extremely high.

Q. Did Col. Gates order offender, so far as the witness could see, go among his troops after the wreck, and by his words or looks cheer them up, and stimulate them to duty? A. I do not think he did one single time.

Q So far as you know was Col. Gates physically capable of going about among his men at that time? A. I believe that he was physically capable, because I frequently saw him walking about in the after cabin as actively as any of us.

Q. Could Colonel Gates have prevented the imprudence in eating, and if not he have caused a proper food to have been furnished to his men, and proper state of discipline to have been maintained, while the troops were on the wreck? A. I do not think he could have prevented the imprudence in eating, because the men were so crowded that it was almost impossible to have anything like system on the issue of provisions to them.

Q From the time of the wreck till the officers and troops give active aid to the master of the ship in baling and lightening the ship? A. I think they did, especially Lieutenant C. S. Winder, Lieutenant Van Voast and Lieutenant Chandler.

Q How many officers were disabled? A Major Merchant, Colonel Burke, Dr. Satterlee, of the command, and Captain Gardiner who was not of the command.

Q. Who were the remaining officers not enumerated by the witness? A. Colonel Gates, Captain Judd, Lieutenant Fremont, Lieutenant W. A. Winder, Lieutenant Lozier and Dr. Wirtz.

Q You have spoken of Dr. Wirtz going to the Kilby—did he go by your permission or under your authority? A. He did not go by my permission. I expressly told Dr. Wirtz that I had no authority to give him permission to leave the ship, nor did I consider myself authorized to order him to stay. I told him that as Dr. Satterlee was disabled I wanted to send Satterlee to the Kilby, and him, Dr. Wirtz, to remain on the wreck; he passed over the stern of the vessel when I was not there, or I did not see him.

Q Did you not give Lieut Lozier permission to go on board the Kilby, stating that he should return to the steamer? A. Early in the evening of the 28th I gave Lieut. Lozier leave to accompany his family to the Kilby with his promise to return to the wreck, and he did return to the wreck, about seven o'clock that same evening. I understood that he returned to the Kilby in the same boat, but I did not give him permission to do so, nor was it necessary for him to do so, because the provisions would have been safely transferred to the Kilby in charge of the coxswain.

Q Do you know why he remained there? A. He was there in consequence of our parting with the Kilby; I do not know what kept him there.

Q Did not Lieut Lozier say he was going to return to the Kilby with a load of provisions, and did you not send a message to Mrs. Wyse, then on board the Kilby, by him? A. When Lozier came into the cabin of the Kilby Capt Watkins, Mr Mellet Lieut. Winder Lieut Chandler and myself, were sitting there taking some supper; Mr. Lozier remarked to me that my wife had sent her love to me, and asked me if I would not like to send the same message to her; I told him yes; but I did not consider this a permission to leave the ship, nor do I remember that he said to me that he was about starting with a load of provisions.

Q. When did you first see Lieut Lozier in the after cabin of the steamer after the wreck? A. It was some time on the day of the 25th December.

The Court then went into secret session of half an hour, and adjourned at three o'clock, to meet this morning at half past ten.

ELOPEMENT AND ARREST OF THE PARTIES.—Day before yesterday a man named Orson Hill took a buggy from a stable in this city, and crossing the State line of Indiana, brought desolation into the domestic bliss of a certain Smith, by carrying off the partner of his joys and sorrows. The parties came to this city on Tuesday evening, and put up at the Rock Island House as husband and wife. The forsaken Smith, in hot pursuit, soon laid his complaint before our police, by whom the runaway couple were apprehended yesterday afternoon, in Murray's store, on Lake street, and a watch and $140, the property of Smith, were recovered from them. A warrant was last evening obtained against Hill and the woman for criminal connection, and at a late hour they were taken from their quarters at the Bridle House and committed for examination.—*Chicago Journal, Feb. 10.*

DEATH IN THE WORKHOUSE IN WASHINGTON.—It is with regret that we announce the death of Orid F. Johnson, a man of acknowledged talent, but whose inability or indisposition to keep away from alcoholic drink has been the cause of his death. Mr. Johnson has occupied some very important positions in the State of Pennsylvania, which he filled with ability. He came to this city a few months since, to take charge of the editorial department of the *Democratic Review*, but which proved a failure. The evening Mr J was taken to the guard house, he was so weak as to be unable to walk, and was carried in a furniture wagon. This morning, when the workhouse gardener came to market, he announced the death of Mr. J., causing no surprise, but exciting the sorrow of all who knew him.—*Washington Star, Feb 11.*

Court Calendar—This Day.

SUPREME COURT—General Term.—Nos. 6, 37, 44, 31, 47, 5, 52, 53, 55, 33, 39, 26, 48, 49, 56.

SUPREME COURT—Circuit.—Nos. 190, 192, 195, 201, 202, 203, 174, 167, 208, 211, 212 to 216, 218.

SUPREME COURT.—Nos. 374, 436, 437, 197, 430, 432, 309, 67, 266, 363, 142, 258, 288, 227, 76, 397, 110, 104½, 226, 366, 272, 74, 417, 438, 439, 441, 442, 444, 445, 446, 448, 449, 450, 448, 450, 461.

COMMON PLEAS—From Nos. 267 to 321.

The Daguerrean Art.

We have been so much accustomed to regard the Daguerrean art as a purely mechanical pursuit that we are apt to confound in the same class the men who follow it merely as a commercial speculation and those who, inspired by a worthier ambition, endeavor to raise it to the level of those cognate arts which owe their excellence as much to genius and taste as to the mechanical skill of the operators. The progress which has been made of late years in the combination of artistic principles, with the positive results of the scientific process, render it desirable that we should endeavor to arrive at some criterion by which we may be enabled to discriminate between the merits of works produced under these separate or joint conditions. There is, perhaps, no branch of science or art which has engaged more of the attention, or perplexed more by its difficulties, the eminent scientific minds of the present day; and yet, curious to say, there is none which has given birth to so much charlatanism and ignorant pretension. It would seem to be a sort of refuge for tried incapacity when all other pursuits fail; for we find men embarking in it without any of the requisite qualities to insure success, and impeding, by their crude efforts, the progress of a really noble and useful discovery. To compare the meagre results which they attain with productions in which practical experience and artistic feeling are combined, would be as relatively correct as to compare the efforts of some self-taught limner with those of a painter who has matured his natural gifts by study and observation. The former may suit the tastes and requirements of those who look upon the identification of the general traits of resemblance in a portrait as all that is essential in a work of art, but they will not satisfy those cultivated minds which seek gratification in a correct and artistic treatment of the subject.

The progress made by the Daguerrean art in this, as compared with other countries, has been so extraordinary, and so difficult to account for, when we consider the little encouragement that is held out to the kindred arts of painting and sculpture, that it becomes interesting to retrace its history, in order to discover the causes that gave it such an impulsion. The invention itself, as our readers are no doubt aware, was first formally communicated to the public by M. Arago, who read an account of the Daguerreotype process before the Academy of Sciences of France, on the 7th of January, 1839. Long before this, however, the elements of the discovery were known to and engaged the attention of chemists. As early as 1802 Mr. Wedgewood proposed a mode of copying window paintings by paper washed with chloride of silver, founded on its known susceptibility to the action of light. Subsequently many scientific persons were in the habit for mere amusement, of making experiments on the same principle. Between the sun and the prepared paper they placed an engraving, which was quickly reproduced on the paper beneath, but with the lights and shadows reversed. This arose from the dark parts of the engravings intercepting the light, while it passed more or less freely through the other portions. But the fruits of these experiments were totally valueless, as they could not be looked at for a few minutes without becoming one entire black blank, through the continued action of the light. M. Niepce, a country gentleman, living at Chalons, on the Saone, engaged so early as 1814 in a train of experiments for the fixation of the photogenic images, both as they were obtained through the camera and other means. He had made some remarkable discoveries on the subject previous to 1826 when he accidentally learned that M Daguerre was engaged in similar researches. This led to a partnership between these gentlemen, for the further prosecution of the subject to their mutual advantage, and at the death of M. Niepce, in 1833, his place was filled by his son. The complete and admirable process ultimately discovered was in a great measure, however, the result of the single and unaided labors of M. Daguerre. In England, Mr. Fox Talbot was contemporaneously engaged in somewhat similar experiments, which resulted in the taking out of a patent, in 1841, for a process termed the Calotype, by which the image is transferred to paper, and from which a number of copies may be obtained from the same negative proof. Modifications of the same discovery were subsequently published by Sir John Herschel and Mr Robert Hunt, to which the respective names of Amphitype and Chromotype were given by the inventors. In these latter branches of the art, which may be classed under the general title of Heliography, the French, have however, surpassed the original discoverers, their photographs upon paper having been almost brought to the perfection of mezzotint engravings.

No sooner had Daguerre's process been made known in this country, than several of our most distinguished scientific men began to experiment, with a view to effecting improvements upon what they justly considered was only the first or elementary stage of a great discovery. From an equivocal expression, (*couleur locale,*) employed in M. Arago's report, it was at first thought that the inventor was either on the road to or had partially discovered the means of reproducing in the plates the local tints of objects, and they accordingly directed their researches towards the attainment of this desirable result. Although but little or no progress has been made towards its consummation, their labors in other respects have not been unattended with success, since most of the improvements that have been effected of late years in the Daguerrean process have originated here. To Professors Morse and Draper, and the Messrs. Chilton, the well known chemists, the credit of many valuable suggestions, and, indeed, the forward state of the art in this country, are in some degree due, for in the hands of the first practical operators who pursued it as a business it would have made little or no progress.

The first Daguerrean gallery which was opened in this city was, if our recollection serves us right that which was erected on the top of the old granite building at the corner of Chambers street, in the beginning of the year 1840. It was of circular form with a glass roof, it being supposed impossible at that time to obtain a good impression without exposing the sitter to the full blaze of the sun. The effect of this glare upon the optic nerves was, of course, to give a distorted and paralytic appearance to the features, and to render hideous what perhaps before only was ugly. It was no wonder that the parties who undertook thus to burlesque the faces of their customers should have found it an unpromising speculation, and have been glad to abandon it before the year was out.

The ill success of the enterprise did not, however, prevent a host of others from immediately following in its wake. As they were, however, conducted in a purely commercial spirit, and without reference to those higher principles which alone could give them a permanent standing, they soon shared the fate of their predecessors. Of the first dozen establishments opened in this city there is not one now in existence—a sufficient warning, we should think, to those who seek to found their claims to public patronage on the degradation of a noble profession.

Fortunately for its interests, however, a new class of practitioners have entered the field within the last ten years. They are men who are imbued, not only with a strong love of the art, but with that pure artistic feeling which renders subordinate to that passion mere pecuniary considerations. From the period when men animated with such a spirit took the art up as a serious pursuit it could not fail to make rapid progress, and accordingly within that time we have not only seen our countrymen outstrip the Europeans in the merit of their productions, but carry their talent into successful competition with them on their own ground. In London and Paris we find two Americans, (Mayall and Thompson,) at the head of the profession.

Of the developement of art in this country some idea may be formed from the fact that there are upwards of 20,000 persons, with a stock of $3,000,000, engaged in its operations. Whilst in each of the European cities above mentioned there are not perhaps more than half a dozen good operators, there are in New York at least a hundred. The standard of excellence is, in fact, much higher with us than in Europe. The European artists depend too much for their effects upon color and finish, whilst we excel in the boldness, depth and solidity of our pictures. That these qualities are, nevertheless, highly appreciated by Europeans, we have abundant proofs, not only in the business success of our artists abroad, but in the triumphs won by them at the London Exhibition. The causes to which we owe this pre eminence may admit of dispute; but, in our opinion, it is principally due to the fact that the results obtained by the Daguerreotype are in their rapidity congenial to the practical and go ahead character of our people, who have not time to waste in the slower and more uncertain process of portrait painting. When the Daguerreotype was first discovered it was thought that it would materially affect the latter branch of art; and so it has, as regards an inferior class of works, which had no real merit to recommend them. To the man of genius, however, it has been found an important auxiliary, for, by taking a photographic likeness of his subject, in the exact position in which he wishes to paint him, he preserves the spirit and originality of his first conception, and spares the sitter the tedium and fatigue necessary to the proper elaboration of his work.

These reflections have been suggested by a recent visit paid to the gallery of Mr. M. B. Brady, of Broadway, a gentleman who may be said to have contributed more than any other man in the profession to the advancement of the Daguerrean art to its present high position in this country. Devoting himself to the pursuit with an ardor and enthusiasm which are rarely witnessed even amongst artists, he has arrived at results that entitle him to rank amongst the first of living operators. His works are distinguished, not only by their boldness and clearness of tone, but by the true artistic feeling that pervades them. In the choice of position, the graceful arrangement of drapery, and the various other incidents that help to make up the *ensemble* of a pleasing and effecting picture, he is unrivalled. His historical portraits form perhaps the most complete and valuable collection in existence. Taken from life, they present to us an exact reproduction of the familiar traits of men whom the nation delighted to honor, and whose memories live enshrined in our hearts. To the present generation their value is great; to the next it will be immense. What would we not now give to look upon the images as thus reproduced of Washington, Jefferson, Randolph, Patrick Henry, and others of the great men with whose names are associated the most glorious events in our political annals? By continuing to devote himself to this noble task of illustrating the men who illustrate the country, Mr. Brady will perpetuate the fame which he has so deservedly acquired.

The Smallpox—Vaccination.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK HERALD.

While the inhabitants of this city are availing themselves of the protective powers of vaccination against the loathsome and too often fatal disease of smallpox, a history of the vaccine virus, as well as an account of the circumstances attending its introduction into general use, will not only interest your readers, but must contribute to the confidence of the public mind on the prophylactic merits of Jenner's great discovery.

Previous to 1789 the ravages of smallpox were the greatest terror of mankind, not only in consequence of its great mortality, but likewise because of its loathsome character, and especially for its effects on the human countenance. Inoculation, the only barrier which was raised as a protection against smallpox, did more evil than good; for, although it ameliorated in many individuals the violence, as well as the fatality, of the disease, still its aggregate evils were increased by the practice of inoculation multiplying the sources of infection. In London, says Dr. Gregory, the evil effects of inoculation were felt in their fullest force. Inoculation was there widely diffused among the lower ranks of society, but without the precaution of seclusion; in consequence of which the contagion of smallpox was encountered daily in the public streets; and country districts, which previously were only visited by smallpox at long intervals, became the constant local ones of that direful disease.

In 1767, Edward Jenner, who was at that time an apprentice in surgery, in Gloucestershire, first became acquainted with a popular notion among the dairymen and maids of that part of England, that the cows of that district frequently communicated to the milkers an eruptive disease, and that those who had been the subjects of it enjoyed forever afterwards a complete immunity from the contagion of smallpox. This interesting fact and observation arrested the attention of young Jenner, and was followed up by him, in a commendable spirit of philosophical research and deduction, until it terminated in the complete establishment of the prophylactic power of the vaccine virus, as regards smallpox, as well as in the general adoption of vaccination, by the intelligent, in as well as out of the medical profession.

It was not until May, 1796, that Dr. Jenner, who was then a medical practitioner in Gloucestershire, became so well satisfied of the safety as well as the protective efficacy of the vaccine disease artificially induced, as to feel justified to introduce it to practice. James Phipps, a boy of eight years of age, was the first recipient of the vaccine disease, by the lancet, and from another human subject. After this, the confidence of the medical profession in the protective powers of cowpox rapidly increased, so that in 1799 thousands of the inhabitants of Great Britain were tested, after being vaccinated, by inoculation with smallpox, and its merits as a prophylactic completely confirmed. In that same year it was introduced into this country by Drs Waterhouse and Cox, and immediately after into every country in Europe, where its merits were triumphantly tested by further experiments, and its claims to public confidence completely established.

Dr Gregory asserts that when vaccination has been successfully performed the following symptoms may be progressively observed: The incision may be felt elevated on the second day, and on the third, a slight inflammation may be observed with a microscope. A slight vesicle, with elevated edges and depressed centre, is formed on the fifth day. It reaches the period of perfection on the eighth day, when it is circular and distended, with a pearl colored lymph, and is surrounded with an inflamed ring or areola, which continues to increase during the two following days. On the tenth day the pustule bursts, and the inflammation begins to decline. The lymph at this time is opaque, and after the vesicle bursts becomes concrete; so that nothing is seen after the second week but a hard scab, of a reddish brown color, exhibiting on its surface six or eight slight pits, corresponding to the number of its cells.

In the adult the constitutional as well as local symptoms run higher than in infancy. This fact has led many to believe that the disease in the adult is more genuine, and that, consequently, the product must be more energetic in the propagation of vaccine diseases—an *a priori* conclusion not warranted by other analagous phenomena, and totally at variance with the general observation—that the disturbance of the animal system is more occasioned by the resistance opposed to the action of agents rather than to their direct operation.

The vaccine disease may, from many causes, both in relation to the virus used as well as to some peculiar condition of the patient, be so modified as to exhibit another class of symptoms, widely differing in progress and appearance from those already mentioned, as being the distinguishing characteristics of true cowpox, and at the same time provoke severer constitutional disturbance, as well as a greater extension of local inflammation. Besides its deviation from the regularity attending the progress of true vaccine disease, the spurious disease is generally noted for its too early and rapid development; the irregularity of the areola, the deep yellow color of the contents of the pustule, exhibiting the appearance more of a bile than of the true specific disease.

Of the many causes which interrupt the development of genuine cowpox, there are two which observation has shown to be most generally operative in its failure: the character of the lymph used, and the health of the patient at the time operated upon. The lymph ought to be taken from a young and healthy subject, and from a pustule not further advanced than the tenth day, for after this the process of common suppuration is established, producing a secretion distinct from that of the specific disease, and which, when introduced into another system, is apt to provoke a too early development of inflammation and a consequent secretion, similar in kind to itself, thus anticipating and interfering with the true vaccine process. Therefore the scab, if possible, ought to be discarded, and the lymph be taken from the pustule when in its stage of greatest perfection, and introduced immediately into the arm of the patient or kept on quills, in a cool temperature until used.

The best age for vaccination is during the first year of life, and as early, if practicable as the fourth month. The child ought to be in perfect health at the time, but especially free from all eruptive and febrile diseases. The regular developement of the pustule ought not to be interfered with, either by exposing it to the friction of the child's dress, or frequent handing; and especially by too early attempts to obtain a supply of matter for future use. Indeed, I think the practice a good one of vaccinating both arms at the same time, using one for the public good, and permitting the other to remain undisturbed.

To secure to the individual the full protective influence of vaccination, it would be well to repeat the operation on different parts, as often as the lymph arrives at perfection, until the system refuses to be affected by it; for it has been found that upwards of thirty per cent of cases will be influenced by repetition, and some even the third and fourth time.

According to the very full and able report of the Select Committee of the British House of Commons, of 1838, it was clearly shown that time produces a decadence in the protective power of vaccination, and the subsequent report of Dr George Gregory, taken from the records of the London Smallpox Hospital, supports the same conclusion. Of two hundred and ninety eight cases of smallpox, previously vaccinated during the epidemic of 1838, none were under five years of age, and only five under nine years of age; while there were one hundred and six between twenty and twenty-four years, and fifty five between twenty five and thirty years of age. These are facts which are calculated to establish the truth of the popular idea, that time does diminish the protective power of cowpox, and that the practice of re-vaccination after intervals of a few years is a safe and judicious one.

The foregoing observations on vaccination are intended to confirm the public in the belief of its protective power, and to point out the causes, as well as to provide for the prevention of the exceptions which usually occur. It is to be hoped that it has been clearly shown that perfect vaccination is dependent upon certain conditions, which, if disregarded, will prevent its regular stages of development, and consequently impair its protective power. The writer feels warranted in believing that more blams is to be attached to the hurried manner in which vaccination is practised on persons who have subsequently been attacked with smallpox, than with any want of protective power in the genuine vaccine disease. This fault is difficult to be avoided in such times as the present, when vaccination is practised by wholesale. "In peace prepare for war," is a maxim which is equally as applicable to public health as to national defences, and the adoption of some plan to encourage a continued practice of vaccination, would be more certain to secure its efficiency as a protection, than the present hurried and promiscuous regulation. This might be effected by a city ordinance, requiring from every scholar a certificate of having undergone the process of vaccination, before admission to the public schools, and then let the family physician, in every case practicable, be the operator; and let him understand that he is responsible for its faithful performance. Could this plan be generally adopted the number of cases of smallpox subsequent to supposed vaccination would be greatly diminished, and the public confidence increased in its prophylactic efficiency. MeH.

STATUS ON THE CALENDAR.—The very common question, "where are we?" the American Almanac answers quite specifically. From its tables we gather these important facts:—We are in the 78th year of the Independence of the United States; the 1,855th year of the Christian era; the 68,967th year of the Julian period; the 5,614th year of the world, Jewish reckoning; the 2,606th year since the foundation of Rome; and the 2,630th year of the Olympiads, or the second year of 658th Olympiad, beginning in July, 1853; and, moreover, we are in the 1,270th year since the Hegira, or flight of Mahomet.

BIGAMY BY A COLORED CLERGYMAN.—The Rev. Bird Parker, a colored clergyman of Chicago, was arrested a day or two since on a charge of bigamy. Having a wife in St. Louis of his own color, to whom he had been married ten or twelve years he took another a few months since "a few shades lighter than himself," in Indianapolis. The former made her appearance in Chicago on the 5th instant, and instituted proceedings against her faithless spouse. He was held to bail in a large amount for trial.

The Chincha Islands.

We copy the following letter from the Chincha Islands from a New Haven paper. These islands are important, as containing large deposits of guano. The abolitionists of our country, and those who are in the habit of lauding the humanity and philanthrophy of England, may have read the other side of the picture, and formed an opinion of the honesty of the motives which she is so fond of parading before the world. It is high time she was unmasked, and we trust the publication of this letter may have this effect, when it meets the eyes of the millions of readers of the NEW YORK HERALD.

The writer says:—

The guano is dug by Chinese coolies or laborers, who are brought here by English ships from the free ports of their native coasts. The poor fellows are made to believe that they are going to do well by engaging to serve as laborers for five years at a real (York shilling) a day and a scanty allowance of rice. They fancy, it is said, they are coming to labor in the gold mines of California. However this may be, it is certain that they are shipped here in English vessels, and transferred or assigned, (or whatever the word for such a transaction should be,) to the Peruvian government. I have known Englishmen who spoke of having been engaged in the traffic. The government places them on these islands, avowedly under the original contract, to labor for five years—but who is to know how far this contract, if such it may be called, is adhered to? The truth is, the poor Chinamen are sold into absolute slavery—sold by Englishmen into slavery—the worst and most cruel, perhaps, in the world. Here are about eight hundred of the unfortunate creatures at work on these islands at a time; as fast as death thins them out the number is increased by new importations. The labor is severe, much more so than that of the negroes on our Southern plantations. They are kept at hard work in the hot sun throughout the day. On the middle island they are tasked, each one, strong and weak alike, to dig from the hill and wheel to the mangneras five tons of guano each per diem. The guano is compact, like hard, clay-like loam, and as dusty, when dug, as ashes. On the north island it has to be blasted for the steam paddies. It has to be wheeled from a hundred yards to a quarter of a mile; the nature of the labor may be conceived. The Chinese work almost naked, under a tropical sun, where it never rains. They are slender figures, and do not look strong. Negro drivers—the most ugly looking blacks I ever saw—are stationed among them, with heavy thongs, which I have seen them use. The poor coolies have no hope of reward, no days of rest. The smoke of their torment goes up on Sundays as well as on week days. It blows away in a yellow cloud miles to leeward, and I never see it without thinking what a hell on earth these islands must be. That I do not exaggerate this account, any one who has been here will readily bear witness. The fact that some of the Chinese almost every week commit suicide to escape their fate shows the true state of their case. I was told that more than sixty had killed themselves during the year, chiefly by throwing themselves from the cliffs. They are buried as they live, like so many dogs. I saw one who had been drowned—it was not known whether accidentally or not—lying on the guano when I first went ashore. All the morning his dead body lay in the sun; in the afternoon they had covered it a few inches, and there it lies, along with many similar heaps, within a few yards of where they are digging. On the north island the Chinese carry heavy water-casks, slung on poles, between two, up the steep hill; they can in this way, as well as in barrows, take weights altogether disproportionate to their slender forms. They look unhappy, as well they may. We know that the Chinese are strongly attached to their native soil. Wretched and half-barbarous as they may be, dark as may be their souls, they still have human feelings, and I am not so constituted that I can witness the injustice of their treatment and their sufferings without compassion—without indignation. It ought to be made known wherever English law prevails, that these poor creatures are deceived and sold into a servitude from which they almost daily seek escape through death by Englishmen. It is not domestic slavery in which they are placed; they were not born slaves; they are not protected by any laws; there are no women with them; their condition is worse than that of any criminals, exiles, or prisoners in any civilized nation. It ought to be everywhere known. Americans, who have to bear the reproaches of the English for institutions entailed upon them, and which they could not avoid, have a right to reply, that the worst slavery that exists among the civilized nations of the earth is maintained by British subjects, who transport coolies to the Chincha Islands. It is not the fault of the English that the same system is not carried on in Australia. The coolies brought there, however, have not turned out a good speculation. But the taking and selling free men to such task-masters as the Peruvians, who are little better than the Chinese, is an outrage to humanity, and a reproach to British rule. Let the next slaver the English cruisers capture be one of their own ships, with a cargo of coolies for this market.

Our Quebec Correspondence.

QUEBEC, Feb. 6, 1854.

The Parliament Houseless—Seeking for Shelter—The Fire—Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Cause—Rumors of a Federal Union of the Five Provinces—The Inspector General and the £10,000 Job—An Ice Bridge opposite Quebec.

In politics nothing new presents itself; things are in *statu quo*—that is to say, attacks upon the Ministry, in every shape, are kept up with unabated vigor, and Ministers pursue the even tenor of their way. It is thought that they are not anxious to make the call to the knights and burgesses for the despatch of business, and that they will avail themselves of the late destruction of the Parliament buildings here further to postpone the day. *On dit*—that they think of the Music Hall for the House of Assembly. As for the Legislative Council—as an honorable member of that body remarked to me yesterday—they have no "name," and therefore require no "local habitation." A small room would do for them; and Swords' Hotel on one side, and Judge Caron's house on the other, would suffice for committee rooms, clerks' offices, &c., &c. There is some talk of Russell's Hotel being selected, the concert room being large enough for the commons and the dining room for the lords. But the Commissioner of Public Works and the Inspector General seem to think that the court house, which has been lately extensively enlarged and repaired, will answer very well; and justice can be dealt out in the City Hall, from which the Conscript Fathers will have to retreat. It does not matter much where they go, for they are really very low in public estimation.

You probably received early intelligence of the sad catastrophe alluded to, which has deprived the ancient Metropolis of Canada of its chief ornament (architecturally and politically,) and which has added so much to the reputation of the city for its fires. It is about the only thing that we do upon a large scale. The origin of the fire has not yet been ascertained, though a commission has been sitting upon inquiry into it for several days. It began in the left (new) wing, adjoining the Mountain Hill guardhouse, and soon spread to the main body of the building, the division walls being extremely thick. The progress of the flames was there arrested for a considerable time, but at last they overcame all resistance, and all hope of saving the rest of the building was gone. Soon the grand dome, visible by a dozen villages, was enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke, and shortly sank in a body into the flaming mass below; the right wing was then consumed, and all that remains of that substantial and not inelegant building is the stone work which composes the walls and divisions. The royal arms upon the façade remain untouched by fire or smoke, and the paintings of Her Majesty and of Sir Allan McNab were carried off unharmed. Nearly all the books of the library and of the Literary and Historical society were saved, but irreparable loss has been sustained in the destruction of rare manuscripts, and also in ornithological and other departments of the new museum of that society.

There has been great sympathy expressed by sister cities, particularly by those that have buildings something larger than ordinary dwelling houses, which they wish, and therefore think, may be at once fitted up for the reception of honorable members, apparently forgetting that in no place in Canada can the inconvenience adverted to be sooner removed than in this city. There are several very large edifices—the Jesuits Barracks, the Music Hall, and adjoining houses, as already mentioned, and the Bishop's Palace—which might, at no great expense, be converted into a parliament house. One thing is certain, the metropolitan feeling of Quebec is very strong, and rumor has it that the home government has come to a decision in favor of the plan of uniting the provinces, and making, as a necessary consequence, Quebec the capital. As it is, it seems very likely that it will not cease to be the seat of government until the expiration of the four years.

The commissioners appointed by the Court of Chancery, Canada West, to take Mr. Hincks' testimony in the Toronto £10,000 job case, commenced their sittings this morning. On the part of Mayor Bowes, G. W. Wicksteed and Geo. Irvine, barristers at law, have been named as commissioners, and on the part of the plaintiff, G. O. Stuart, Esq., advocate, and James Dean, merchant. The Hon. John Ross, and Attorney General West, appears for defendants, and Andrew Stuart, for plaintiffs. The commissioners merely met, and, in consequence of the sitting of the Superior Court, adjourned to the 8th inst. What the nature of the Inspector General's testimony may be will not be known until after publication of the commission, by order of the court. He is pushing on the commissioners, and apparently very anxious to have the matter investigated and brought to a conclusion.

The Quebeckers are in ecstasies the *post* has taken, and a sleigh was driven over to Point Levi this morning—it is one clear sheet. In a few days it will present a sight worth seeing, making, as it does, a magnificent promenade and racing ground, and we expect to see upon it a few American trotters. Q.

City Intelligence.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.—The 14th of February, the day for love-making, postising, and sonnet singing, has again arrived. The origin of this anniversary has been so often repeated that it is unnecessary again to write its history; suffice it to say, St. Valentine is still, as of old, devoutly adored by the love-sick portion of humanity, who look forward to his holiday as the opportune time for giving vent to their pent up passions of love and tenderness, making this day, as it were, the bunghole of the year, through which their fond emotions annually effervesce.

St. Valentine's day! St. Valentine's day!
Time of solace to love burdened hearts,
Bright with hopes and dark with tears,
Brilliant with smiles, and gloomy with fears.
Varied with murmuring, kissing and sighing,
With true love, inconstancy, pining and dying;
Longed for and prayed for, by the grave and the gay.
This love-making festival, St. Valentine's day

The shop windows are adorned with the sweetest and most tempting epistles, on which little Cupid stands out in bold relief all around the borders. Great big hearts, all painted red to look bloody, and stuck full of arrows, some of them run through and through, with the feather on one side and the barbed head on the other, presenting a gory and melancholy spectacle, stare at you at every turn, about as liable to be taken for as old maid's pincushion as the symbol of bleeding and lacerated affections. The valentines are as various as the desires of the customers; anything can be obtained, from the vilest caricature to the other extreme, varying in price from one cent to a hundred dollars. "Here is one, adapted to almost any use, made in fact to suit circumstances—equally as well calculated for a lawyer, minister, or doctor, as for a butcher, jockey, or tradesman. It is remarkable on account of the immense size of the nose, which appears to have frightened the head away, and crushed the unfortunate body which was intended to carry it into very insignificant proportions; this squeezed up carcass, is one daub of red paint, expressive of no particular idea, unless it be that the blood is oozing from every sore on account of the great weight imposed upon it. Now, as what is beautiful and fit is a mere matter of opinion, those whose partiality runs in favor of large smelling organs have here a valentine suited to any purpose. By the side of this lays one, sweet in itself, but sweeter by the contrast. It is rich with ornamental work and beautiful in its design. It is filled with "honeyed words," and all the scents of Lubin could not add to its attraction. The poetry on it is original; but how to class it would puzzle the Muse herself, who is so kindly invoked in the opening line. Whether of the heroic order or blank verse is a difficult question to solve, for it may with equal justice be compared to the style of Pope or Milton. The author showed a great aversion to metre, but made up the deficiency in rhyming, upon which he is "some;" no two lines had the same poetic measurment—but then they ended with "bliss" and "kiss," "love" and "dove," "heart" and "dart," as nicely as could be desired. But why measure with poetic rules the valentine sonnet? In Love's lexicon there is no such word as criticism. If the adoring swain has somewhat overstepped the poetic license, yet he has expressed himself good and strong, and unmistakably, and the head and not the heart is to be condemned.

The postman to day is watched for with anxiety, and each ring at the bell is music to listening ears. It is a day of work for him, as

The bags were stuffed tight, with letters over night,
To be delivered to the girls in the morning.

The rites of this festival are limited to no age, sex, or condition.

Steady old fellows in want of a wife,
To cheer their respectable elderly life;
Young men to settle in life just begun;
Young men not settled, but who do it for fun;
Girls of eleven, who don't want to marry,
But still adore Master Tom, Johnny or Harry;
All I all take delight in the return of this day,
And scamper along, young and old, grave and gay,
As if they'd the—What do you call-him to pay.

Notwithstanding this anniversary has many pleasing associations, yet it has also its disagreeable ones; and hundreds pervert the privileges which the custom guarantees by obscenity, vulgarity and malignity. It is to be hoped these abuses of the anniversary are growing weaker, and that the hosts of Cupid are growing stronger and purer.

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.—At the annual election for officers and directors of the Mechanics' Institute, held at the rooms, No. 1 Bowery, on January 10, in accordance with section 2 of bye-laws, the following ticket was elected, and on January 17 the report of the Inspectors of Election was accepted and adopted by the Board of Directors. Subsequently, at a meeting of the Institute, on February 3, the report of the inspectors was accepted and adopted. Messrs. Godwin and Stone, the inspectors of election, appointed in accordance with the above section, have certified that the following gentlemen have been duly elected:—President, Jacob A. Westervelt, ship builder; First Vice President, J