

Reprints of two valuable histories have been before us for nearly a month from the well-supplied shelves of Mr. Franck Taylor, but the hurry and the throng of political questions have not permitted us to take them up; one of which is the following:

"The History of Rome, by B. G. NIEBUHR. Translated by Julius Charles Hare, M.A. and Connon Thirlwall, M.A. Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge. Vol. I, part 1, with a map. From the third London edition, revised." To be completed in 5 vols. 8vo. Lea & Blanchard, Philad. 1844.

These volumes will offer what has never before been presented to the public of this country—the great work of NIEBUHR, confessedly the masterpiece of historical inquiry in modern times, in a complete form. For only two of the volumes now prepared have yet appeared among us—those to which the names, as translators, of Hare and Thirlwall apply. The third is Englished by William Smith and Leonard Schmitz; the fourth and fifth, which have just appeared in London, and embrace the period from the first Punic war to the death of Constantine, are by Schmitz alone.

With the two former volumes of the book only we are conversant. For the remainder we look with the highest expectations of such instruction as, by its importance, its originality, its profoundness, not to the novelty of many of the views, the admirable learning and acuteness which have led to them, is fit, apart from all the charm of regular narrative, to delight the habitual explorer of history, seeking always not merely to know the surface, the received semblance of the great past, but its social being, its true causes, the secret powers that have formed the fortunes of a nation truly eminent.

Next to Gibbon's matchless book—the vastest monument of historic toil ever raised—the consent of all critics must place these remarkable volumes, the learning of which is crowned by a skill in the philosophy of institutions and events such as has never before been applied to the regular elucidation of the obscurest times of an important body of annals.

It is in the consummate ability with which he has examined the half-mythologic details of early Latin records, and given now consistency and now a meaning to what before was almost a chaos of doubt, contradiction, conjecture, or mere fable, that the legitimate merit of NIEBUHR lies; and far less in the popular renown which has given him, as brilliant and singular discoveries, several theories which he has more than any other confirmed, but which he has (as scholars know) far from being the first to suggest, or even, in some instances, to establish.

Of the system which he has applied to the elucidation of early Italian history, all the elements are distinctly enough furnished in the book of that great father of the Criticism and Philosophy of History, Vico; whose "Scienza Nuova" first saw the light in 1725. To him are due at once the theory of Wolf as to the origin and authorship of the Homeric poems; the bardic, legendary sources of Roman and Greek records, passing for authentic stories; and many of those other ideas since developed by secondary writers, with a fortunate reputation of originality.

Voltaire may be said to have been the first to apply, in his "Pyrhionisme de l'Histoire," his "Essai sur les Mœurs," &c. to historic narrative the principles that Vico had laid down. As to Rome, Beaufort soon afterwards (about 1740, as well as we remember) embodied, in his "Incertainité des cinq premiers siècles de l'Histoire Romaine," many of the questions which Niebuhr has now successfully solved. Of the immediate investigations of Niebuhr, Micheli had already, in 1810, performed (with much though certainly inferior research and skill) an important part in his "Italia avanti il dominio dei Romani"—his history of the Italian tribes, before the rise of the Roman power. And as to the importance of the prevailing historical errors in regard to the Agrarian Laws and the conduct and fate of the Gracchi—things of which popular reputation assigned all the credit to Niebuhr—it is well known to those acquainted with the progress of classical investigation that Heyne had (since, we think—far we write from memory—about 1786) set all these matters in a perfectly clear light.

These popular errors as to Niebuhr—themselves not unlike many of those which he has overturned—may well be mentioned, without disparagement to his true reputation—that sure and lasting admiration which he has won and must hold among the learned, as far the most consummate example of the able and complete application, to a particular body of obscure events, of the Science of History.

Yet even Niebuhr has his omissions. Admirably as he has traced the legendary sources of many of the tales that adorn the early romance of the Roman annals, one curious, and we think most obvious instance of the manner in which they often borrow from the Greek legends has escaped him. We will point to it—not because this is a fit vehicle or we the fit explorers of historic antiquities, but because the matter itself conveys an apologue of no little political meaning.

All are familiar with the old story of the stratagem practised by Tarquin the Proud and his son Sextus to obtain possession of the neighboring city and Republic of Gabii. It may be found repeated in Niebuhr, at page 238 of vol. 1. That warlike little State, of a mixed popular and aristocratic government, such as Rome afterwards became, had long withstood the progress of Rome's early conquests. Finding them not to be subdued in the fair field, Tarquin and his son affected to quarrel violently: the king inflicted on him stripes and other punishments reserved only for the lowest malefactors. As if by burning with rage at these indignities, Sextus fled and took refuge with the Gabians: there, his reputation as a soldier, his apparent fury of resentment against his father, and his knowledge of all his plans, at once procured him a general confidence. He was allowed to lead some expeditions, and, in these, sided always by secret concert with his father, finally obtained such uniform and brilliant successes as soon gave him the reputation of their native leaders soon waned completely, and Sextus, the people's darling, rose to the dictatorship of Gabii. Arrived at this point, he found that directly to betray the town into his father's hands was impossible: he therefore despatched a confidential messenger to his father, informing him of the success of their plans thus far, and desiring to know what should be his next step? The messenger found the king in his garden and delivered himself of his errand. The wily tyrant chose not to entrust him with any answer but that of a practical enigma: as he listened he walked up and down, amusing himself seemingly with striking off with a stick the tallest poppy-heads in a bed that grew before him; then dismissed the wondering messenger without an answer. He returned to Sextus, related the king's strange conduct, which he took for nothing less than a fit of phtrezy. Not so Sextus, however, who soon guessed the riddle of his father's meaning: that was a dark hint to put out of the way the chief of the Gabii; after which, destitute of counsel and of experience, the multitude could easily be managed or forced to the will of a usurper, either domestic or foreign. He proceeded then: set on popular jealousy against one leading citizen, assassinated another, procured the banishment of a third by suborned accusers, crushed a fourth with his mere military popularity, had a fifth torn to pieces as a friend of the Romans, and soon swept away every thing that withstood his designs. Remaining thus master of every thing, he was soon able to turn over Gabii to his father.

Now, this story is clearly made up out of two in Herodotus. The first is that of Darius and Zopyrus, told at length in the 3d book of the Histories. The second is that of Thrasybulus and Pericles, related in the 92d section of the 5th book, (Terpsychus.)

TO THE EDITORS.

WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 24, 1844.

GENTLEMEN: Efforts have been made to reduce the price of the Public Lands, and have as uniformly been defeated. The chief argument urged in favor of a reduction of the price, is that there is a large number of acres subject to private entry at the minimum price (\$1.25 per acre) in many of the States unentered, and therefore those lands cannot be worth the price placed upon them by Congress.

As the Government is the sole proprietor of the public domain, it alone has the power to estimate its value. The nominal value can best be estimated by the readiness with which purchases are made; and the millions of acres which are entered each year, show that the present price is not exorbitant. The intrinsic or real value can only be calculated by the amount of capital, in labor and money employed in the purchase and cultivation, and the adequate return of profit on this capital employed. If this rule be just, the real value must be far beyond the nominal price, from the fact of the rapid augmentation of the price after the smallest improvement upon the land, which, in the brief period of three or four years, is generally several hundred per cent. above the nominal price of the Government.

But there are authentic facts which will conduce to a more ready conclusion on this subject than any abstract reasoning. On the 25th of April, 1828, the Senate passed a resolution in substance requiring the Registers and Receivers to report the number of acres in each land district, and their estimate of its value. Those who reported estimated the quantity of acres in their several districts at 50,500,334.95, and its aggregate value at \$20,700,566.68.

On the 15th December, 1840, the Senate passed the following resolution: "That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to communicate to the Senate statements showing the quantity of land reported by the Registers and Receivers of the several Land Offices, in pursuance of the resolution of the Senate of the 25th April, 1828, to have been unsold in their respective districts on the 30th day of June, 1828, after having been offered at the minimum price per acre; discriminating between the several land districts; what proportion of the land so unsold on that day consisted of first-rate land, and what was unfit for cultivation, according to the reports of the said officers; and what their estimate of the average value per acre of the said unsold land; and what part of the said land, so remaining unsold

on the 30th day of June, 1828, is now sold, and at what price, discriminating between the amount sold in each of the districts.

And the Secretary is further directed to cause parallel columns to be prepared, exhibiting in one column the quantity of land unsold, on the day aforesaid, by each district, the amount since sold; the value as assessed or estimated by the said officers, and the prices at which the lands have since actually sold; and the aggregate value of the lands so assessed, and the aggregate amount of the sales made since the 30th June, 1828, in each land district."

In answer to this resolution the Secretary of the Treasury transmitted to the Senate a very full and lucid report, (No. 92, 2d session 26th Congress,) from which I transcribe the annexed table; which exhibits the fact that about 19,000,000 acres sold in a few years for about \$4,000,000 more than the Registers and Receivers had estimated 50,000,000 to be worth; and that in the Tuscaloosa district, in Alabama, (a State from whence most of the propositions to reduce the price of the public lands originate,) there were, in 1828, 3,149,306 acres of public lands, estimated by the Register and Receiver to be worth but \$157,465 30, of which were sold, up to September 30, 1840, 18,919,29 acres, for the sum of \$1,013,739 29; exhibiting the proof that less than one-third of the public lands in that district sold for more than six times the amount of its estimated value a few years before. Similar results were realized in other districts.

At the eleventh page of the same report, the Register and Receiver of the Tuscaloosa land district of Alabama, acting under order, state that on the 30th of June, 1828, the "quantity of land remaining unsold" was 3,149,306 acres, of which 10,000 acres were "fit for cultivation," and 3,137,306 acres were "unfit for cultivation." The table exhibits that of the 3,137,306 acres, in twelve years after there were sold 810,932.23 acres, and the amount received for the same was \$1,013,739 29; showing that less than one-third of the amount of the land sold for more than six times the estimated value of the entire quantity as stated by the Register and Receiver, who computed the whole to be worth but \$157,465 30.

As population is rapidly and progressively increasing, so will be the value of the land increase. What was regarded as refuse lands in Ohio twelve years ago, are now productive and valuable farms; and the same causes and effects are operating in all the States.

Respectfully,
W. COST JOHNSON.

STATEMENT exhibiting, in one connected view, in parallel columns, the quantity of Public Land in market and unsold on the 30th of June, 1828, in each Land District, the aggregate value of the same, as assessed or estimated by the Land Officers; the quantity thereof sold since June 30, 1828, up to September, 1840, and the aggregate value of said sales.

Table with columns: Land District, Quantity of land remaining unsold on the 30th of June, 1828, Acres, Dollars, and Quantity of land sold from the 1st July, 1828, to the 30th Sept., 1840, Acres, Dollars.

*The quantity reported by the Land Officers at Zanesville was 647,935 acres: it has subsequently been ascertained to have been here put down.

†This is the estimate of the Registers—about fifty-four cents per acre. The Receiver estimates the average value at less than thirty to thirty-four cents per acre.

‡Independent of the sales in these districts there have been granted to the State of Ohio lands that were subject to entry on the 30th of June, 1828, to aid in the construction of her canals, 313,093 acres in the Tiffin district, and 140,827 acres in the Cincinnati district.

THE REPORTED DUEL.—A report having by some means obtained currency in the newspapers that a duel had been fought between two Students of the Georgetown College, in this District, it may relieve the anxiety of some parents at a distance who have sons at that institution to state that the report is totally groundless. The nearest approach to any thing like foundation for the report is, that a student was lately accidentally injured by the bursting of a bottle of hydrogen gas, used for chemical experiments, and had passed through Bladenburg, on his way home. It is this explosion, possibly, which was blown into a duel.

GREAT EXCITEMENT AT HUDSON.—The citizens of Hudson, New York, have held several public meetings within the past week to devise some precautionary measures, in consequence of the great excitement which pervades the community and the many threats thrown out by the anti-renters of a determination to rescue from the jail the prisoners who have lately been arrested. A committee of safety was organized, and authorized to call upon the State for five hundred stand of arms. Another committee was appointed to draft and circulate petitions praying the Legislature to pass a law for the immediate and effectual suppression of armed masked forces, and, if necessary, to quarter troops in the counties disturbed by these lawless and organized forces. A night patrol of twenty citizens in each ward, in addition to the city watch, was organized; and, in addition, the Hudson Light Guards, in case of fire or any other alarm by night, have received orders from the officer in command to rendezvous at the court-house instanter.

MR. WILLIAM CALDER, of Wilmington, North Carolina, was lost overboard from the steamer Governor Dudley, on his way from Charleston, about midnight of Friday, the 20th instanter. He was standing near the wheelhouse conversing with the captain when his hat blew off, and in the effort to recover it, he was precipitated overboard, directly under one of the paddlewheels. He was a native of Charlestown, Mass.

MONROE AND INDIAN OUTRAGE.—The Warsaw Signal of the 10th instanter contains a rumor, put forth the week previous, in relation to the fact of Lyman Wright and his band of Mormons having a fight at a trading station, about ninety miles above Prairie du Chien. It appears that Wright's band were suffering for the want of provisions, but he would not let them disperse over the country to find employment. In order to relieve them, he went to the traders, and finding that they had flour they tried to get some on credit, but was refused. He then took three men, and told the traders that if they did not let him have the flour, he would take it. He was defied, and made the attack on the store. The French and Indians fired on his men and killed four on the spot, and it is supposed that nearly all fell in the retreat.

STRANDBURY MOUNT PLEASANT.—There is great reason to fear (says the New York Commercial Advertiser) that this boat is lost, and that all on board have perished. She sailed from New York about 5 o'clock on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 10th instanter, for Philadelphia. The wind then came up fresh from the north, and increased to a gale before midnight. The probability is that she rolled her keel overboard and foundered. We learn that the boat she carried was too small to hold her crew, even if they had the opportunity of using it. The Mount Pleasant had been purchased by Messrs. McMain and Schuber, of Philadelphia, to run to Lewesdown, Delaware. Mr. McMain was on board with a crew which he brought on from Philadelphia. We can only learn the name of one of them, Captain Clifton, the pilot. The engineer, Erastus Hilton, was from Albany, where he has left a wife and four children.

The splendid new steamer Cambria, intended for form one of the royal mail line from Liverpool to Boston, is now completely finished, and will make her first trip across the Atlantic on the fourth of January next, under the able command of Captain JUDKINS.

WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 28, 1844.

Neither House of Congress will be in session to-day, the House of Representatives having yesterday followed the example of the Senate, and adjourned over to Monday.

There is evidently no disposition in either House to pass upon any business of consequence before the New Year comes in.

Following the error of some other paper, we lately announced the death of Hon. HEMAN ALLEN, of Vermont, late Minister to Chili, and formerly a Representative in Congress. That gentleman, we now learn from good authority, is alive and well, residing at Highgate.

The gentleman whose death must be regretted by every one, who knows how to appreciate the union in the same character of the most perfect integrity and simplicity with excellent sense and sound judgment, all tempered with a diffusive benevolence, was the Hon. HEMAN ALLEN, of Burlington, Vermont, who also had served as a Representative in Congress at different times for several years with enviable repute.

GREAT IMPROVEMENT in the mode of using the Magnetic Telegraph.—We understand that Dr. PAGE, of the Patent Office, on Wednesday applied one of his recently constructed magneto-electric machines to furnish the electricity to Professor MORSE's Telegraph, instead of the great galvanic battery hitherto employed for that purpose. That battery is not only troublesome and expensive, but its management requires exposure to the fumes of acids and other chemical substances which cannot but prove prejudicial to health. The magneto-electric machine, being entirely mechanical in its construction, avoids all these inconveniences.

We learn that on the occasion in question, while Dr. PAGE operated his machine in the Patent Office, Professor MORSE, at the City Post Office, operated by his aid the Telegraph between this city and Baltimore, and performed all the usual functions of his machine through a distance of eighty miles.

We look upon this as a vast improvement on the wonder-working invention which has for so long so much astonished and delighted our citizens.

MASSACHUSETTS SPECIAL ELECTION.—We learn from the Boston Atlas that the Whigs of Old Massachusetts obtained another signal triumph on Monday last, when called upon to choose Representatives in the next Congress for the four districts of that State which failed to effect a choice at the general election in November.

Returns from all the towns but three, in the second district, re-elect DANIEL P. KING, the present able Whig Representative, by an overwhelming majority—something like thirteen hundred votes.

In the fourth district, Mr. PARMENTER, the present Democratic incumbent, is defeated, and BENJAMIN THOMPSON, a staunch and true Whig, is elected to supply his place by a majority exceeding three hundred votes.

In the fifth district returns have been received from a number of towns, which leave no doubt of the re-election of CHARLES HUDSON, the present able and faithful Representative from that district.

In the ninth district there is no choice. Mr. WILLIAMS (Democrat) is again defeated, and the Whigs will try hard to elect Mr. HALE at the next trial.

The result of the elections in these Congressional districts is highly encouraging. It shows that notwithstanding the unfortunate result of the late Presidential election, Whig Principles do and will prevail in Old Massachusetts. In the next Congress she will have nine certainly, and perhaps an unbroken phalanx of ten Representatives, who will advocate boldly and eloquently true Republican principles.

ALABAMA ON REPUUDIATION.—On the 17th instanter the House of Representatives of the State of Alabama passed, by an almost unanimous vote, a series of resolutions denouncing the repudiation of debts by the States.

These resolutions were reported by the "Committee on Federal Relations," in response to resolutions of the same character received from the States of CONNECTICUT and GEORGIA, which in effect declare that any State failing to recognize her great seal as evidence of her obligations was not entitled to the respect of her sister States.

SECRETS WORTH KNOWING.—The following extract, taken from one of the most trusted of the organs of "the Democracy" of New York, makes a curious revelation, if we may confide in its truth, of the state of things in our Department of Foreign Affairs:

FROM THE NEW YORK MORNING NEWS.—The following paragraph, from a letter which we find in the Philadelphia Ledger, agrees so entirely with the intelligence which we receive from a well-informed correspondent, that we lay it before our readers:

"The whole Cabinet, individually, have condemned Mr. SHANNON's conduct, and were it not for the correspondence of the Department of State, every act would be disavowed, if the wishes of Mr. CALHOUN could prevail. He, too, is committed through the improper use made of a despatch, and this accounts for the effort to vanish 'over mistakes, to which there happen to be higher parties.'"

THE LADIES OF VIRGINIA have taken up with a zeal and earnestness that must command success the measure of an appropriate tribute to HENRY CLAY. The following address from the officers of the Association formed at Richmond for this object was published a day or two since:

Whig Women of Virginia: A Society has been formed for the purpose of erecting a Statue to HENRY CLAY, and we ask your zealous aid and co-operation. In associating ourselves for this purpose we do not enter the political arena nor pass the limit assigned to our sex. HENRY CLAY has been rejected by the Nation, as we believe unjustly; but we bow to the decision, and declare that our admiration of this great man is independent of the party politics of the day. Asking no voice in the councils of our country, we may be permitted to exercise the privilege of offering a tribute to true patriotism, exalted worth, and spotless honor. As Virginians, we would record the merits of her noble son. As Americans, we would testify our gratitude to the statesman and orator—to the friend of his country and the benefactor of his kind. We ask the assistance of the Whig women of Virginia in this undertaking, and trust we shall not appear in vain.

LUCY BARBOUR, President.
JULIA LEECH, 1st Vice President.
SALLY B. FRY, 2d Vice President.
LOUISA CARRINGTON, 3d Vice President.

FROM MEXICO.

FROM THE LOUISVILLE JOURNAL OF FRIDAY.

We find in the New York Sun the subjoined intelligence from Mexico, which reached New York by way of Havana. It alludes to events some of which must have occurred two or three days subsequently to our last accounts by way of New Orleans:

"By the fast-sailing barque Rapid, in twelve days from Havana, we have received full files of papers. A steamer had arrived from Vera Cruz shortly before the Rapid sailed, bringing a few days' later news of interest, which we have translated. The most important is, that Congress had ordered the manifestoes of the Revolutionary General to be printed. The Supreme Government had issued orders to General SANTA ANNA, then at his place at Mango de Clava, forthwith to unite in his command the troops in the district of Jalapa, which amounted to upwards of 10,000 men, and to proceed against PARRAS and his comrades. Accordingly, as we already know, SANTA ANNA issued his proclamation, put himself at the head of 7,000 infantry, 1,500 cavalry, and twenty field-pieces; and on the 23d he left Mexico and marched towards Queretaro, with General REYES, to which point the troops followed him. About this time the Mexican Congress passed a resolution censuring the Minister at War for having issued orders to SANTA ANNA to take command of the army of the Republic, when the Constitution prohibited the Supreme Executive from acting in that capacity. The reply of the Secretary not having been deemed satisfactory, they decided that General SANTA ANNA had been assigned to command the troops of a district, and was not placed at the head of the army. It was therefore deemed necessary that the Minister should forthwith resign the command of SANTA ANNA. Meanwhile, General BASSADEL has been appointed to take his place. How SANTA ANNA will relish an order which places him under the command of a junior officer remains to be seen. The Havana papers speak in the most disapproving manner of the state of affairs in Mexico. The Indians continue to pour in upon the Mexicans from every direction. It is said that the American Minister had made every communication to the Government, and the French had sent an agent to demand explanations relative to orders offered to French citizens. Great confusion and disorder prevailed in every section of that devoted country."

THE TARIFF AND PENNSYLVANIA.—The recent debate in Congress on the tariff, although but incidental, shows that the extreme lines of the dominant party can never converge on the subject of protection. Mr. FOSTER, of Pennsylvania, asserted that the recent election was its salvation; Mr. PAYNE, of Alabama, that it was its destruction. That the people of Pennsylvania were swindled on the subject of the tariff, no one doubts; if they do, the late meeting of the friends of Polk in Sugarloaf township, Luzerne county, will set the matter clear. At that meeting the following resolutions were passed, which the Wilkesbarre Farmer, one of their organs, omitted, and the Tunkhannock Patrol would not publish at all:

"Resolved, That we are in favor of the tariff of 1842, and will do all in our power to sustain it, believing that it will calculate to advance the best interests of the people of the Keystone State, as well as the whole people of the Union. It is a tariff for revenue, and gives incidental protection to the real staples of this State.

"Resolved, That this was the issue made at the polls on the first day of November, and we are determined to recommend such measures as were fully canvassed by the people at the election. We are opposed to free trade, and believe the country cannot prosper if free trade principles are adopted.

"Resolved, That we do hereby instruct our Representatives in Congress and in the Senate and Assembly of this State to vote for and use their influence to sustain the tariff of 1842."

THE MORMONS.—The Illinois House of Representatives, by a vote of 108 to 4, have referred a bill repealing the Mormon charters to the Judiciary Committee. That is right. It ought never to have been granted in the monstrous form in which it was granted. The vote on the question of reference was, we may say, unanimous, the four nays being Mormons. Its passage is not doubted by a like majority.

This action shows plainly enough the folly of any sect leaning upon the arm of a party.

The opposition led on these Mormons, step by step; they gave an extravagant charter to get their votes; that done, and there being no further or immediate need for their help, they are tossed overboard without a passing sympathy or a friendly parting. So it will be with all bodies of men who sacrifice self-respect or duty in the hope of gaining some selfish ends by an unnatural or unholy alliance with any party.

If these Mormons had been dealt rightly with, or the Legislature of Illinois had treated them as they would have done any Christian body, we should have been spared the violence and murders which have occurred in or near the Mormon settlement. Upon the legislators of that State rest the responsibility of this violence and these murders.

"This retribution (not yet exhausted) meted out to Illinois, must be seen and understood by her citizens.—Cincinnati Gazette.

The Cincinnati Gazette, speaking of the late steamboat collision on the Mississippi, by which thirty-one lives were lost, says:

"We shall not join in the usual parrot-like assertions on like occasions, 'that no blame whatever is attached to the officers.' Great blame and a fearful responsibility do attach somewhere for the reckless waste of human life that is continually taking place on the Mississippi. There are crowds of steamboats and other water craft continually navigating the Hudson and East rivers at New York, where a fatal collision of boats is almost a thing unknown."

FROM THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.—A letter of July 16th, from Honolulu, mentions the arrival of the English frigate Thalia, Capt. Hooper, and the United States ship Warren, Commander Hull, both vessels from Tahiti. The Thalia, and the English war steamer Salamander, had been cruising off the harbor of Papeete (Tahiti) ten days, being refused entrance, except on condition of saluting the French flag on the island, which they would not consent to, as their Government had not, as yet, recognised the possession of the island by the French.

The presence of the English vessels is said to incite the Tahitians to warlike acts, and to postpone the pacification of the island—in consequence of which much angry feeling and some acrimonious correspondence has ensued.

Gov. Bruat has about nine hundred soldiers under his command, besides a frigate, war steamer, and several corvettes. He is strongly fortifying the harbor with batteries of heavy Paixhan guns, laying out roads, and making every preparation for permanent possession. But, since his last rough handling of the natives, not feeling secure, he has sent to the Marquesas for a reinforcement. The Tahitians, numbering about three thousand men, tolerably well armed, with field pieces and ammunition, have advanced their lines to within ten miles of the town; and, were they not restrained by the influence of Queen POMARE, who is opposed to the warfare, they would give much trouble to the Frenchmen. Indeed, it is feared that they will fire the town. The Thalia brought a pitious letter from Queen Pomare to Gen. W. Miller, the British Consul General, imploring his presence in a man-of-war, to protect her and her subjects. He sails in a few days for Tahiti, in the Thalia.

Willmer & Smith's Liverpool Times says of American securities:

"The arrival of the Hibernia, bringing full confirmation of the election of Mr. Polk to the Presidential Chair, has caused an entire absence of demand for United States securities. Scarcely a transaction has since taken place; and, though we do not alter the quotations, they must be considered as quite nominal; their rise or fall depends altogether upon the future policy of the new Government."

TERRIBLE STEAMBOAT ACCIDENT.

FROM THE LOUISVILLE JOURNAL OF FRIDAY.

We are again called on to record a most melancholy occurrence on the Mississippi river, by which more than thirty lives were lost.

About 12 o'clock on Saturday night, the 14th instanter, as the Belle of Clarksville, from New Orleans for Nashville, was rounding the bar below the Horseshoe Cut-off, she came in collision with the Louisiana, from Memphis on her way to New Orleans. The Belle of Clarksville did not obey her helm, but sheered off, by which she came directly across the bow of the Louisiana. The engines of both boats were immediately stopped, but not in time to prevent collision. The Belle of Clarksville was entirely demolished, the hull parting from the cabin and the cabin breaking into two pieces. The hull instantly went down, and the cabin floated to Old Town landing, about twenty-five miles below Helena.

The Louisiana took from the fragments all the persons on them. As far as can be ascertained thirty-one lives were lost. Below we give a list of them. They were nearly all residents of West Tennessee.

Wm. Tabb, P. Linn, W. Linn, J. Ryan, R. Mahale, N. Sills, Wm. Jones, T. Whitley, N. T. Allen, A. Kirkland, J. Askey, G. Hyer, son of J. W. Hull, J. Peay, Jno. Holiday, (assistant engineer,) four negroes belonging to J. Peay, twelve negro hands belonging to boat—31.

The survivors lost all their baggage. Nearly all the passengers who were saved came up on the Duke of Orleans, the clerk of which boat we are indebted for the foregoing particulars.

NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 26, 1844.

The transactions at the Exchange to-day were but limited, and no very marked variation in the prices of stocks may be looked for till after the first of January. There was an advance of one-and-a-half per cent. in Pennsylvania fives, which are now quoted at 74. Ohio sixes fell one-quarter, and Illinois sixes rose one-half. It would be as easy to tell where the wind cometh and whither it goeth as to give a good reason for these fluctuations. Specie continues to be exported in considerable quantities. The Liverpool took out \$70,000 in gold on Tuesday, and the Silvie de Grasse upwards of \$16,000.

Capitalists in this country, as well as in England, manifest at present a marked preference for railroad investments. The whole capital stock of the New York and New Haven railroad, amounting to two millions of dollars, is said to have been taken by some twenty individuals or firms; and it is expected that operations for its construction will be commenced early in the spring. The route from New Haven to Harlem has been carefully surveyed under the superintendence of Professor TWINTON, chief Engineer, who reports favorably as to the suitability of the intervening country. There will be an uninterrupted railroad communication from this city to Boston when this railroad is completed.

Great excitement prevails in Columbia and Rensselaer counties in consequence of the late murders and arrests. The Governor's proclamation, calling upon the Sheriffs to do their duty effectually, has added fuel to the flame. It was waited upon on Monday by a delegation of the Common Council of the city of Hudson with an application to send arms and ammunition to assist in guarding the jail. Much trouble from this source is anticipated.

Among the new books received by the Acadia, I find one "On the discovery of the Mississippi, and on the Southwestern, Oregon, and Northwestern boundary of the United States; with a translation from the original manuscript of memoirs, &c. relating to the discovery of the Mississippi by Robert Cavell de la Salle and the Chevalier Henry de Toully; by THOMAS FALCONER." There are some valuable contributions to American history in this work, many of the facts being drawn from documents in the archives of Paris, never before published. Mr. FALCONER labors to show that the boundaries of Louisiana, instead of extending to the Rio Grande del Norte, reached but little beyond the Mississippi—that in the northwest they stopped very far short of Canada—and that in the west they did not extend beyond the Mississippi. He argues consequently that the claim of the United States to Oregon is unfounded; that the clause in the treaty with Napoleon, on which that claim is founded, is unauthorized; and that England has as much right to Oregon as the United States, if we found our right on the sale of Louisiana. He then tries to prove that the claim founded on prior discovery is equally untenable. He justifies the revolt of the Texans, and writes temperately and candidly in regard to the United States. If he does not convince his interests and informers.

An edition of the second series of the Essays of Mr. EMERSON, of Concord, Massachusetts, has just appeared in London, introduced by a characteristic preface from the pen of THOMAS CARLYLE, who says: "Our brave EMERSON has here brought us new fire from the empyrean." The work is favorably noticed by the London papers.

An important arrest of counterfeiters was made in this city on Thursday week in a house in Spring street. Two men named Hiram Brown and Michael O'Brien were arrested in the act of taking impressions of counterfeit bills. A plate of the Fairbank Bank, Massachusetts, was on the press; and upwards of \$1,000 in these bills unissued were found in their possession. There were also spurious bills on the Northampton Bank, Massachusetts, and of other spurious bills were discovered in the room. A quantity of other bills were fully committed for trial.

A good deal of excitement was produced in the lower part of Broadway, opposite Trinity Church, yesterday, about one o'clock in the afternoon, by the report of a pistol, and a night of a gentleman falling wounded to the ground. A resident had taken place between two French merchants of this city, EUGENE GAGNEY, Esq., of Beaver street, and Monsieur EWART, of the firm of Renard & Co. It seems that there had been an old quarrel between the parties, which resulted on the present occasion in GAGNEY's offering a gross insult, which EWART resented by a pistol-shot, on a litter. His wound is in his left side, severe, though not dangerous. EWART was arrested and conducted to the police office, but subsequently released.

The American Art Union had its annual meeting at the Society Library last evening, when the distribution of pictures by lot took place. This institution is established solely for the encouragement of the fine arts. Every subscriber of five dollars or more annually becomes a member of the association entitled to all its privileges. The whole amount of the money obtained by these subscriptions, after defraying necessary expenses, is applied, first, to the execution of an engraving of some choice painting by an American artist; and, next, to the purchase of such works as the managing committee may think most worthy to be distributed by lot among the members. Fifty-one paintings, some of them rare merit, and all by native artists, were distributed at the annual meeting last December; and on Friday evening no less than eighty pictures of varying merit were distributed. The drawing took place in the presence of a large number of persons. One of the choicest pieces to my eyes was that by DEAS, entitled "Long Jakes, the Rocky Mountain man." It represents a western hunter on horseback, and is remarkably full of spirit. DEAS is at present attached to Major Wharton's expedition to the Canaanee Indians, among whom this meritorious young artist will doubtless hard up new and original materials for his pencil. The picture of "Long Jakes" was drawn by a gentleman in Norwich, Connecticut. An excellent landscape, by Durand, and pictures of merit, by Rothermel, Weir, Cole, Doughty, and others, fell nearly all to the lot of distant subscribers. A fine marble bust of Washington Allston, by Brackett, was drawn by a gentleman in Utica.