THE DISPATCH.

BY COWARDIN & ELLYSON.

The DAILY DISPATCH is delivered to subscribers at 12c. per week, payable to the carrier weekly. Mailed at $6 per annum; $3.50 for six months; 75c. per month for a shorter period.

The SEMI-WEEKLY DISPATCH at $4 per annum, or $2.50 for six months.

The WEEKLY DISPATCH at $2 per annum.

RAILROADS.

RICHMOND AND DANVILLE RAILROAD—CHANGE OF SCHEDULE.—On and after TUESDAY, December 12th, the PASSENGER TRAIN on this road will run as follows:

Leave Richmond daily, Sundays excepted, 7:40, A. M. Arrive at Danville, 5:10, P. M.

Leave Danville daily, Sundays excepted 5:30, A. M. Arrive in Richmond, 3:15, P. M.

Trains connect at Burkeville with trains on the Southside railroad for Lynchburg, and at Danville with the trains on the Piedmont railroad for Greensboro', Charlotte, &c.

THOMAS DODAMEAD, Superintendent.

de 12—ts

VIRGINIA CENTRAL RAILROAD. The following regular trains will be run on this road on and after WEDNESDAY, October 18:

A MAIL TRAIN DAILY (except on Sundays), between Richmond and Staunton, leaving Richmond at 7.15 A. M. and Staunton at 8 A. M.

A TRI-WEEKLY MAIL TRAIN, leaving Staunton at 7 A. M. for the West, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

THE MAIL TRAIN leaving Richmond connect with trains on the ORANGE AND ALEXANDRIA RAILROAD. The DAY MAIL TRAIN connects with STAGE COACHES at Staunton, Lexington, Winchester, &c.

The train west of Staunton connects with STAGE COACHES for Rockbridge Baths, Rockbridge Alum, Warm, Hot and Healing Springs, and the White Sulphur and Lewisburg.

A FREIGHT TRAIN between Richmond and Staunton connects with Freight Trains on Orange and Alexandria railroad for Lynchburg and Alexandria.

FREIGHT will be sent to any point on the Orange and Alexandria railroad without change of cars.

Goods purchased in Northern cities can be sent direct to any station on this road where the company has an agent by consigning them to STEPHEN HUNTER, General Freight Agent, Richmond. The charge for the transit through Richmond, including wharfage, drayage, storage and commissions, will not exceed ten cents per one hundred pounds, and on heavy articles will be much less. Freights will be collected at destination.

Through tickets can be purchased at this office to Lynchburg, Bristol, Knoxville, Chattanooga and Dalton.

Tickets to Lexington, Va., at $11.

Freight office at Richmond closed at 3 P. M.

H. D. WHITCOMB, General Superintendent.

de 11—ts

OFFICE RICHMOND, FREDERICKSBURG AND POTOMAC RAILROAD COMPANY, RICHMOND, October 27, 1865.

THE QUICKEST AND MOST DIRECT ROUTE TO THE NORTH AND WEST, VIA THE RICHMOND, FREDERICKSBURG AND POTOMAC RAILROAD.

THROUGH TO WASHINGTON IN SEVEN AND A HALF HOURS.

TWO THROUGH TRAINS leave the Depot, corner Broad and Eighth streets, Shockoe Hill, DAILY, (Sunday night excepted,) at 7 A. M. and 8 P. M., and arrive in Washington at 2.15 P. M. and 4.20 A. M., connecting with the EARLY AFTERNOON AND MORNING EXPRESS TRAINS FOR THE NORTH AND WEST.

THROUGH TICKETS TO ALEXANDRIA, WASHINGTON, BALTIMORE PHILADELPHIA, NEW YORK, AND TO ALL THE PRINCIPAL CITIES IN THE WEST AND NORTHWEST.

BAGGAGE checked through to Alexandria, Washington, Baltimore Philadelphia and New York, accompanied by through Baggage Masters. Passengers breakfast and sup at ASHLAND, and dine on board POTOMAC STEAMERS.

For further information and through tickets, apply at the office of the Company, corner Broad and Eighth streets, Shockoe Hill; at the office of R. H. STROTHER, Exchange Broker, Main street, between Eighth and Ninth, nearly opposite Spotswood Hotel, and at Messrs. THOMAS & RICHARDSON'S Commission House, on Wall street, between Main and Franklin, in rear of St. Charles Hotel.

SAMUEL RUTH, Superintendent.

J. B. GENTRY, General Ticket Agent.

LOUIS ZIMMER, General Western Agent.

de 11—1m

EXPRESS COMPANIES.

RICHMOND, VA., November 24, 1865.

ADAMS EXPRESS COMPANY.

GREAT EASTERN, WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EXPRESS FORWARDERS.

ADAMS EXPRESS COMPANY are prepared with unequalled facilities to forward GOODS, VALUABLES AND MONEY TO EVERY PART OF THE WORLD.

WAGONS will call at any part of the city for goods without extra charge.

All Express matter transported by this Company is forwarded by FAST EXPRESS, and not by SLOW FREIGHT TRAINS.

Leave orders and make contracts at our office, 237 Main street.

E. G. WESCOTT, Assistant Superintendent.

de 11—10t

GARBER & CO.'S RICHMOND CITY OMNIBUS AND STAGE LINE. The proprietors would respectfully inform the traveling public that they have, at a heavy expense, established a line of splendid FOUR-HORSE COACHES AND OMNIBUSES, for the purpose of transporting passengers and their baggage to and from the different railroad depots and steamboat landings, to and from all parts of the city, and respectfully solicit their patronage.

Charges less than by any other conveyance.

We have placed BOXES in the Ballard, Exchange, Spotswood, Powhatan and Monumental Hotels, where persons desiring to leave by any of the railroads or steamers can leave their orders by 7 o'clock, P. M., and will be called for next morning in time for the train or boat they wish to go on. Orders can also be left at our office, corner of Seventeenth and Marshall streets.

Passengers going South dine at the Powhatan Hotel, our line of Coaches leaving there daily at 5.10 and 7.15 A. M. and 3.05 P. M., and in time to connect with trains on the Richmond and Danville and Richmond and Petersburg railroads.

de 11—3m GARBER & CO

BUCK'S CELEBRATED FLOUR and other brands,
500 barrels PRIME BUCK-EYE and MERCER POTATOES,
30 barrels CIDER VINEGAR,
SUPERIOR FAMILY SOAPS,
BOURBON and PURE OLD RYE WHISKY,
MANUFACTURED and LEAF TOBACCO,
SMOKING TOBACCO, in bulk and small packages;
FICKEN & WILLIAMS'S REFINED SUGARS,
PURE and EXTRA WHITE LEAD,
PHOSPHATES and BONE DUST,
LIME and CEMENT,
SWEET CIDER,
on consignment and for sale by
PALMER, HARTSOOK & CO., Libby Buildings.

de 11—1m

FIVE HUNDRED BALES OF HAY,
100 bags MEAL,
1,000 bushels CORN,
2,000 bushels OATS,
1,000 bushels BROWNSTUFF,
100 sacks SALT,
100 barrels FLOUR,
100 kegs LARD,
50 kegs BUTTER,
BACON HAMS, SIDES and BREAST PIECES,
50 boxes FAMILY CHEESE,
SUGAR, COFFEE, TEA and MOLASSES,
BRANDIES, WINES,
IRISH and SCOTCH WHISKIES,
JAMAICA RUM and
DUC DE MONTEBELLO CHAMPAGNE,
in store, wholesale and retail, at lowest cash prices, by
STYLL & DAVIS.

de 11—10t

POWHATAN HOTEL, CORNER ELEVENTH AND BROAD STREETS, (near the Capitol,) RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.

GEORGE J. SCAMMELL, PROPRIETOR.

This HOUSE, having been put in thorough repair and re-furnished in the most complete style, is prepared to receive guests. The accommodations are FIRST CLASS, and guests can rely upon finding in the POWHATAN the comforts of home, with all the luxuries of a hotel of the character it claims to possess.

de 11—3m

LIQUORS.—LARGEST AND BEST ASSORTMENT IN TOWN.
WHISKY of every grade, some very fine and old;
OLD LONDON DOCK BRANDY, 1851;
COGNAC BRANDY, dark and pale;
SHERRY, PORT AND MADEIRA WINES,
FINE OLD JAMAICA AND ST. CROIX RUM,
SCOTCH AND IRISH WHISKY,
CHAMPAGNE, best brands;
CHERRY AND APPLE BRANDY,
ENGLISH AND SCOTCH ALE AND PORTER,
HOLLAND GIN,
FINE HAVANA CIGARS,
for sale in quantities to suit the trade, on best terms, by
O. FERGUSON,
No. 44 Main street, Richmond, Va.

de 11—1m

DAILY DISPATCH.

VOL. 29—NO. 81. RICHMOND, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1865. PRICE, TWO CENTS.

Richmond Dispatch.

TUESDAY..............DECEMBER 12, 1865.

THE GREAT DROUGHT.

A Thrilling Story.

We select for the *Dispatch*, upon its re-appearance, a very remarkable story, with the above title, which was published in *Blackwood* many years since. It will be read with additional interest since we have recently passed through a drought of near three months' duration, and of very great severity. The awful effects of a suspension of the rains from Heaven, and the drying up of the springs of the earth, are described in this story with thrilling power. It was written by Mrs. Clive, an English authoress of very decided genius.—Mrs. Mitford, in her "Recollections of a Literary Life," remarking upon her character as well as her writings, says of her: "There never was a more remarkable contrast between the temperament of the poetess and the temperament of the woman; than that which exists between the thoughtful gravity, the almost gloomy melancholy, that characterizes the writings of that celebrated initial letter, 'V.,' of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and the charming, cheerful, light-hearted lady known as Mrs. Clive. * * * Happy sister, happy mother, happy wife; she even bears the burden of a large fortune and a great house without the slightest diminution of the delightful animal spirits which always seem to me to be, of her many gifts, the choicest. * * * As, however, everybody that thinks deeply, as she does, must have some moments of sadness, she is content to put them into her writings; sometimes in prose, for her story of 'The Great Drought' has an intensity of tragic power, a realization of impossible horrors, such as gave their fascination to the best works of Godwin: sometimes in verse, where the depth of thought and fearless originality of treatment frequently redeem the commonest subject from anything like common-place."

THE GREAT DROUGHT.

CHAPTER I.

In the spring and summer of 18—, rain began to fall, and the first things that perished for want of water died that year. But the moisture of the earth was still abundant, and the plants which took deep root found sustenance below, so that the forest trees showed an abundance of foliage, and the harvest in some kinds was plentiful. Towards the autumn, rain returned again, and everything appeared to be recovering its former order; but the dry winter, dry spring, dry summer of next year, told on the face of creation. Many trees put forth small and scanty leaves, and many perished altogether; whole species were cut off; for instance, except where they were artificially preserved, one could not find a living ash or beech; few were kept alive by means of man, for water began to be hoarded for the necessaries of life. The wheat was watered, and, where such a thing was possible, the hay fields also; but numbers of animals died, and numbers were killed this year—the first from thirst and the last to reduce the consumers of the precious element. Still the rich commanded the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life; and the arts which required a consumption of water were carried on as yet, and continued in practice even longer than prudence warranted—so strong was the force of habit, and the pressure of the artificial necessities which they supplied. The railroads were, as yet, in activity, and when water failed along the line, it was brought from the sea by the rich companies concerned in the traffic; only the fares were raised, and the trains which ran for pleasure merely were suspended. But in the midst of business and interest there was a deep gloom. Projects which affected the fortunes of nations were in suspense, because there was no rain; cares for the succession of crowns and the formation of constitutions might all be futile if there should be no rain; and it seemed as if there never would be any, for this was now the third year, and the earth had not yet received a shower. And now ceasing to be supplied from their usual sources, the springs and rivers withered and shrank. Water became, in many places, not dear, but unattainable. The greatest people of the land left it, and used their wealth in chasing the retreating element from place to place on the earth. In some cases, among these luxurious spirits, there were scenes of extravagant revelry still; they had no employment except to live, and they endeavored to make the act of living as exciting as their old amusements had been. But accounts of foreign countries came more and more rarely to England; for, when the fourth rainless year arrived, drought and famine had slain three-fourths of its inhabitants, and commerce and agriculture were alike suspended. When a vessel came as far up in the mouth of a river as the sinking waters permitted, it brought tidings of desolation from whatever part it had left.—Stories began to be spread of dry land in parts of the ocean, where it had never been seen before; marks which had stood in the deep of the sea might now be walked around at all times of the tide, and thick crusts of salt were beginning to spread upon tracts of the great deep. These tidings came from foreign lands at long intervals—and at long intervals was a ship sent from any English haven. The few dwellers on the coast knew not if there were any dwellers in the interior; for England was become like the desert, and there were no beasts to carry one across it, and no water to be hoarded in skins for the passage. Traffic of every kind ceased; industry was gone; the secrets of science and the cultivated mind of the philosopher were all bent to the production of water; and many a precious object was resolved back into its elements, and afforded a scanty supply for a few parched mouths. The lingering inhabitants had the produce of past years only to live upon, which nothing replenished as diminished, and to renew which the baked earth was wholly incompetent.

In the heart of this desert there lived a family which had hitherto survived the destruction of life around them. It consisted of a father and mother, and two young children, Charles and Alice—the last of whom, the girl, was but a few months old when the Great Drought began. They had lived in Derbyshire, near the range of low hills called the Peak, and they and other inhabitants of that region had found water, longer than many others, from the sides of the hills and from excavations which they had made in the rocks. The strong hope and expectation of rain had kept them lingering on as long as any supply lasted; and Paulett, who, in the days when ranks existed, had been a great landlord, had used both his knowledge and his influence to supply the wants of the people and to postpone their destruction. But those days were gone by; his possessions were so much dust; he wanted water, and nobody wanted anything else. He was a mere man now like those who are born naked and die naked, and had to struggle with the needs of nature even as every one else. Meantime his education availed him, and the resources which it taught him prolonged the lives of his family and himself. But he was soon obliged to limit himself to this sole care, for the supply he obtained was scanty, and he knew how precarious it must be. He had explored the cavern of the Peak with great attention, and he bored the rock in various places and used means suggested by his knowledge of natural causes, which had procured a slender flow of water into a basin which he had made. The fury of thirsty men for water was so great that he was obliged to keep his secret with the utmost care; and towards the end of the fourth year he removed his wife and children to the cavern itself, and blocked up the entrance in such a manner that he could defend it against any chance survivor. There was no want of the luxuries of furniture in the cavern—all the splendors of the land were at the command of those who would take them, and Paulett brought there whatever had adorned his home when the earth was a fit dwelling place for man. There was velvet and down to lie upon; there were carpets on which the little Alice could roll; there were warm dresses and luxurious ornaments of the toillette; whatever could be used for comfort he had brought, and all other precious things he had left in his open house, locking himself and his family up with only water. At first there would be sometimes a miserable man or woman tracing the presence of living creatures and crying for water. Paulett or his wife supplied several, and when they had been refreshed they revealed the secret to others; or, being strengthened themselves, felt the desperate desire of life revive, and attempted violence to get at the treasure. After this, the inhabitants of the cavern fell back to mere self-preservation, and the father and mother were able to harden their hearts against others by looking at the two creatures whom they had born into the world, and who depended upon them. But, indeed, life seemed to shrink rapidly to nothing over the face of the country. It was very rare to see a moving form of any kind—skeletons of beasts and men were in plenty, and their white bones lay on the arid soil; or even their withered shapes, dried by the air and the sun, were stretched out on the places where they had ceased to suffer; but life was most rare, and it became scarcely necessary to use any precaution against an invader of their store. The dreadful misery was, that this store diminished. The heart of the earth seemed drying, and was ceasing to be capable of yielding moisture even to the utmost wrenching of science. There was so little one hot day that Paulett and Ellen scarcely moistened their lips after their meal of baked corn, and warned the children that the draught they received was the only one that could be given them. Charles was now seven years old, and had learned to submit, but his longing eyes pleaded for more; little Alice was clamorous, and the mother felt tears overflow her eyes to think that there was no possibility of yielding to that childish peevishness, and that the absolute non-existence of water must punish her poor child's willfulness. When Paulett had set his instruments to work to renew, if possible, the supply, and when Ellen had removed the silver cups and dishes which had held their corn and water, he and she sat down at the mouth of the cavern, and the little ones got their playthings and placed them on a piece of rock not far off. The mouth of the cave is lofty, and there is a sort of a terrace running along one side, at the foot of which lay the channel of the stream that was now dry. The view is down the first reach of a narrow valley, which turns presently afterwards, and so shuts out the world beyond from sight; and the hill on each side rises high, and, from its perpendicularity, seems even higher than it is. The shade of the cavern was deep and cool, but the sky glowed with the heat and light of the sun, and there was not a cloud to hinder him from burning up the earth. The hill sides, the channel where the brook had flowed, the stones of the cave, were all equally bare; there was no sound of voice, or bird, or insect—no cool drops from the ceiling of the cave—no moisture even in the coolness of the shadow. Ellen leaned her head on her husband and Paulett pressed his arm round her; both of them were thinking of the basin empty of water. "Ellen," said Paulett, "I think the time is come when the elements shall melt with fervid heat. It seems like the conflagration of the world; not, indeed, as we have always fancied it, with flames and visible fire, but not the less on that account the action of heat. It is, perhaps, the Last Day."

"I hope it is," said Ellen, "I hope it is; I wish those precious creatures may be among those that are alive and remain, and may be spared the torments of this thirsty death."

"You and I could bear it if they were gone," said Paulett, glancing at them and withdrawing his eyes.

"Oh, yes!" said Ellen, pressing near to him, and taking his hand in both hers. They were silent, and they heard the children talking as they played.

"There is King Alexander," said Charles, setting up a pebble; "he is going to dinner. Put the dinner, Alice."

Alice put out several other pebbles before King Alexander.

"And he has a great feast. There is plenty of water, more than he can drink, and he drinks—drinks as much as he likes, and still there is plenty of water when he goes to bed."

"Poor children! I can't bear it," said Ellen.

"Oh, Ellen! it would have been better never to have given them birth," said Paulett.

"No; not that," said Ellen, sitting down again; "though they must suffer, they are better to be; when this suffering has dissolved their bodies, on the other side of these mortal pains there is ease and happiness."

"True, true, dear Ellen," said Paulett; "it is only difficult to die."

He held her hand, and while he did so his eye fastened on a diamond ring which she wore. She observed his fixed look.

"You gave me that when we little thought how it was we should part—when I was a bride—and there was all the pleasure and business of the world round us. It hardly seems as if we were the same creatures."

"No, we are not; for I am thinking concerning that ring which you were never to part with, whether I could not convert the diamond into water."

"How, Paulett?"

"I can't explain it to you, but it has just crossed my mind that it is possible; and if so, there are still plenty of jewels in the world to keep us alive."

He drew off the ring as he spoke, and went into the interior of the cave, whither Ellen followed him. There was a fire and some apparatus belonging to Paulett, which he had used in experiments upon the decreasing water of the basin. He knocked the stone out of its setting, and applied himself to decompose it over the fire. He put forth all his skill and all his power, and was successful; the diamond disappeared, and there remained a few drops of water. He looked at his wife and smiled; she raised her eyes to his, astonished and pleased, took the cup from his hand and looked at the precious metamorphosis.

"I'll give it the children," she said, and was going away, but he stopped her. "No, Ellen, there is not enough to do any good; you and I will drink each others health in it;" and he put the cup first to her lips and then to his own. "God bless you, my dear Ellen!" he said, "my wife, I pledge you again with that diamond. The first drop of water comes from the stone that plighed my faith to you, and may it bring you health and happiness yet."

"God bless you, my husband! If we could but die now."

CHAPTER II.

Paulett now exerted himself to collect all the diamonds that remained without owners in the neighborhood. First he visited his own forsaken home, and took thence the jewels which he had neglected in his retreat from it, but which were now as precious as water. He found no great store even after ransacking all the houses within reach, and determined to undertake a longer journey in search of more.

The basin in the cavern continued to yield a scanty supply of water, and Paulett extracted a small quantity from his stones. He made what provision he could for his family before setting out, and for his own necessities took the smallest possible portion in a silver vessel, which was most preciously secured and concealed about his person. It was a strange parting between his wife and him, both of them feeling and saying that alive they should probably not meet again; yet Death was so near them constantly, and was so far better than life, that his presence had grown familiar; and it was only the mode in which he would come that made them anxious. Paulett perishing alone with thirst was the fearful image to Ellen; and Ellen and her children waiting for him, and dying one after the other for want of his help, was the dread of Paulett.—They stood in the cavern, and embraced each other silently, and blessed their children with the same prayer for the last time. The little ones received and returned his caress, and Paulett quitted the cavern, and set out on his uncertain expedition.

The face of the country was so much changed that he had some difficulty in making his way. The vivid colors of the earth were all gone, and in place of them was the painful greyness of the dead trees, and the yellow of the parched soil. Nothing was overthrown in ruin, but all stood dead in its place. The shapes of men and animals lay strewn upon the earth. The human beings were comparatively rare; they were the last survivors of the destroying drought, whom there had been none to bury; but these had at length died by hundreds, and in their places their bones were seen whiter than any other object; or, if anywhere over the surface there hung a vapor, it came from some collection of dead bodies, which had not yet been resolved into the elements. Those whom he found there were mostly in heaps—the beasts had died singly; near what had been water-courses he saw more than once signs of struggle; and the last battles of earth had been fought for the possession of its waters. He traced out many a pathetic story among the dry bones and faded garments. Women's dresses were there; and fallen into a shapeless heap on what had been their bosoms, were little forms, and the raiment of children. Where the dry air and the sun had preserved the face, he beheld the fallen estate of those who had been men in the uncovered shame of death; open lips, the sunken eyes over which the eyelid was undrawn, the sullen tongue, the frame writhed into an expression of anguish, revealed all the pain and shame of death. But here and there the hand of some one who had been a survivor was visible in the attempt to conceal all this. In one place there was a shallow grave, into which a body had been rolled, and lay on its side; and close by, on a heap of clothes, out of which bones appeared, there was a spade, with which the unfinished work had been attempted. In another, a female body was covered from sun and moon by a man's cloak, and a few paces off lay a man, whom nothing had shielded. There was an infant's skeleton, wrapped in a woman's shawl, under what had been a hawthorn hedge; the mother had either perished attempting to find water, or had laid her child down and gone away, like Hagar in the desert, not to see it die. The poor innocent's skull was turned on its shoulder; its cheek must have rested there while the face remained. It was too young to have struggled much. Paulett thought on his little Alice; of her unconsciousness to the fate around her; of what would be her and Charles's and poor Ellen's fate if he failed in his search or perished by the way. He roused himself from looking on all these sorrowful objects and went on his dreary way. The second day after he left the cavern he came to a stately pile of building, which he determined to explore for the life-giving stones he was in search of. It stood upon its terraces, surrounded by its colonades and garden and steps, in all its old pride and glory. Its forests were withered, indeed; its gardens burned; its fountains dry; but the palace glanced back the sunlight, and was as steadfast and perfect as in the days of the living. Paulett drew near, and found, as he came close, signs of the last days of life in it. The doors were open to the air, and a few marks of objects removed remained in the outer rooms. There was scoring and dragging on the marble floor; and Paulett doubted for a moment what had left these marks, till he saw on one side of a gilded table a barrel lying there empty, from which the top, as it seemed, had been accidentally knocked, and the liquor had flowed out. The marble bore the stains of wine, and where it had flowed the slabs were broken in two places, perhaps from the violence of the struggle of those who saw the liquid flow to wet each one his own parched lips. Paulett thought the lord of the castle had probably deserted it before the worst crisis had arrived, and had tried to remove what was most valuable in his possession. He went on through long galleries and magnificent rooms, all silent as death; statues which represented man in his glory and in his strength; books which were the work of that high spirit, now extinguished under the pressure of bodily want; luxurious superfluities which were for better days of the world—all was valueless, all open; he might go where he would, until, at length, one door resisted his efforts, and seemed to have been barred with a certain care from within.

Paulett's heart beat high. Was there some one still living, like himself? another human creature struggling for existence in this great world, and guarding, as he had done in his cavern, his treasure of water? Should he have another companion to speak with; another with whom, perhaps, to get over the evil days; to whom to communicate his secret of producing water from diamonds? For the first time since he left the cavern he spoke aloud; he called—he called in the great silence of the earth, but nothing answered him. If any one was still alive, he might be afraid of another living creature. Had not he himself left pistols loaded for his poor Ellen to defend her life and her children if any human being should come near? He gently shook the door; then proceeded to more violence, and forced it open. It was the door of a great dining-room, on whose lofty ceiling, as he entered it, wreaths of smoke rolled, which the air had put in motion, and a heavy smell, as of burned charcoal, struck him as he entered. There were no living creatures—the inhabitants were all dead in the last posture of life. The table was covered with silver and gold vessels, and among them were dead flowers and fruits, dried by the close chamber. It should seem they had drunk deeply before they died here—perhaps they had collected the last liquids and resolved to perish when they had once more feasted; for there was wine still in some of the vessels; nay, in one there was water; and the ghostly shapes were adorned and fantastically covered with jewels and velvet, and all sorts of rare and exquisite ornaments. Some were still on chairs, some fallen forward on the table, some prostrate, as if they had lain down to sleep. There were fragments of shivered glass on the floor; there was a statue broken to pieces on the table, on the pedestal of which was written "Patience"; there were pieces of torn paper in the hands of one, which seemed a letter; all these faint shadowings of long stories, and of a scene of which there remained no witness, struck Paulett's eye. One had sunk down by the silver tripod in which the charcoal had been burned, and the match that fired it was amongst his garments. One face was there resting on a sofa, still perfect enough to show it had been a beautiful woman; and roses, artfully made close to nature, crowned the long hair which fell upon arms from which the flesh had withered. On the neck were diamonds, on the hands diamonds—diamonds had confined the ringlets—diamonds sparkled on her feet. Paulett shuddered as he took them away. The spirit, indeed, was gone; but here was the last act of the spirit before it plunged into an unknown region—it knew not where. Paulett asked himself where. "A little longer," said he, "and they must have died; could not they wait their time, and take patience with death? Must they die in drunkenness, in madness—worse than beasts?" Then his own thirsty eyes fixed on the table, where, in the light of the sun, the water sparkled and gave rainbow rays. He forgot all beside in the impulse which urged him to seize and drink—to drink the first draught—to satiate his thirst with water. He drank and revived, and then blamed himself for yielding so passionately to the impulse which was now passed away, and as it passed the horror of the scene around him acquired greater force, and he longed to be out of its influence. He made haste to collect all the jewels around him, and when he had done, found that his burden was as much as he could safely carry. He went hastily out of the room, as if any of these figures could rise and follow him, and fastened the door again where the crime had been wrought.—He hastily crossed the marble halls and came out in the sunlight—the solemn sunlight that looked upon a burnt-up world.

CHAPTER III.

Meanwhile poor Ellen waited anxiously in the cavern, and as soon as the first possible moment for Paulett's return was passed, her fears grew strong. There was so much danger for him in the bare desert, with his scanty supply of water, that she might well listen to fear as soon as it had any reason to make itself heard; and with this dread, when she next drew water from her scanty supply, came the horrible torment of the anticipated death by thirst, which seemed descending upon her children and her. The day she had thought he would return rose and set, and so did another and another; and from fearing she had begun to believe, indeed, that Paulett's earthly hours were passed; yet hope would not be subdued entirely; and then she felt that perhaps by prolonging their lives another day only she should save them to welcome him, and to profit by his hard-earned treasure.—The store of water was sacredly precious.—She dealt it out in the smallest portions to her children, and she herself scarcely wetted her lips; she hardened her heart to see her boy's pale face, her girl's feverish eye; she checked even the motherly tenderness of her habits lest the softening of her heart should overcome her resolution; and so she laid them in their beds the third night of her dread, when indeed there was scarce another day's supply. She herself lay on her's, but deadly anxiety kept her from sleeping, and her ears ached with the silence which ought to have been broken by a step. And at last, oh, joy! there was a foot. Yes; a few moments made that certain which, from the first, indeed, she believed, but which was so faint that it wanted confirmation to her bodily sense. Up sprang Ellen, and darted to meet him. She held forward the candle into the air, and lo! it was a woman. Ellen screamed aloud; the woman had seen her before, and said nothing—only pressed forward. "Who are you?" cried Ellen; "are you alive?" "Yes, just alive; and see here," said the woman, uncovering the face of her young child; "my child is just alive, too. Give me water before it dies."

"Then my children will perish," said Ellen.

"No, no," said the woman; "how are you alive now, unless you have plenty? All mine are gone but this one. My husband died yesterday; ours has been gone days."

"My husband is dead, too," said Ellen, "and I have only one draught left."

"Then I will take it," said the mother, rushing forward.

Ellen caught her and struggled with her.—The poor child mourned in its mother's arms, and a pang shot through the breast of Ellen. "For God's sake, miserable woman," she said, "do not go near that basin! You are mad with want; you will leave none for my children. Stay here and I will bring your child water. You and I can want, and yours and mine can drink."

But the desperate woman passed on, her eyes fixed on the water and dilated with intense desire; her lips wide open, dying almost for the draught. Ellen's soul was concentrated in the fear that the last hope of her boy and girl's life was about to be lost; she struggled with the woman with all her might; she screamed aloud; she lost her hold; she seized a pistol from the table, and, close as she was to her adversary, fired it full at her. The mother fell with a shriek. Ellen started forward and broke her fall, and laid hold on the child to free it from her dying grasp.

"Give him me, give him me!" said the mother, struggling to lift herself up, and stretching her hands out for the boy.

The trembling Ellen stooped to give him to her, but the child's head drooped on one side as she held him out. He made no effort to get into his mother's arms. Ellen wildly raised his face, and he was dead, too. The shot had gone through his breast to his mother's, and a little blood began to steal from his lips.

"He's dead!" said the mother, who was herself passing away. "Oh, my boy!" and then feebly, with her fast-failing strength, she raised him, after more than one effort, in her arms, and pressed her lips to his twice with all the passion that death left in her. The wasted form of the child lay there, all pale and withered; the straight brown hair was parted on his thin forehead; the mother's uncovered breast, where his head rested, was white, and the hands delicate; the raiment was luxurious; that head had not been reared in expectation of dying on a bed of rock. Ellen burst into a flood of tears, and wrung her hands as she stood by, looking on what she had done.

The woman lifted her eyes and tried to form her lips into a smile; she no longer felt any vehement passion, and the torment of thirst was now only one of the pangs of death.—Her eyes wandered to the water, but when Ellen moved to fetch some, she stopped her. "No; it was for him. He is at ease now.—You did right. Don't grieve."

"Forgive me," said Ellen, kneeling at her side.

"Oh, yes! the poor, precious babe suffers no more. I was mad; you said truly in that. I nursed him at my breast till his lips grew dry even there; we lived not far from your cavern, and I have seen you, and been glad you had water. We had some. *We!* Yes; is not my husband dead; and my boy is dead, too! See! there is blood on his face; wipe it away; he will die else." Ellen's sobs caught her wandering attention. "I remember now, you killed him! Oh, good angel, guardian angel! You have killed him, and there is only I to suffer. He is gone from this dear, dear body! I wish it did not look so like him still—it looks in pain, too—it looks thirsty." Ellen hid her own face on the mother's shoulder for an instant—her children had awakened at the noise of the pistol, and they were out of bed and clinging around her; her sorrow roused theirs, and the sound of their lamentation reached the dying woman's ear. "There are my children crying. Alas! I thought they had all been dead."

"They are mine," said Ellen. "Yours are at rest; yours *are* all dead."

"Thank God!" said the mother; and, though the words were earnest, the voice was faint; all the effort of nature was in them, but they came feebly from her lips. After that, indistinct sounds and murmured names only were heard; her breath came in gasps and at long and longer intervals, till the faint shuddering of her limbs ceased by degrees, and, after it had been insensible to the world for awhile, the spirit quitted it forever. Ellen's heart died within her; her senses were troubled, and she pressed herself in Paulett's arms without knowing when he came or being surprised that he was there.

"Oh, Paulett!" she said at last, "I have not done wrong, but it is so dreadful!"

Paulett soon gathered from her all that had happened, and gazed with pity on what had once been a beautiful form, but rejoiced that it suffered no longer. Ellen, shuddering, arranged the dress, composed the limbs, and, with a thousand tears, placed the infant on that breast which had been so faithfully its mother to the last. And there they slept—mother and child—the day of trouble ended for both.

"My poor Ellen," said Paulett. "I wish it were thou and my children who were there at rest!" and Ellen pressed her Charles and her Alice to her heart, and would have been glad if they had, indeed, been dead.

CHAPTER IV.

In that time of trouble and unexampled events, the mind received impressions in a different manner from what it had ever done before. The stern gloom that hung over the future, the hazard upon which life was suspended, the close contact with universal death, and the desperate struggle by which it was staved off, gave to all things a new character; and the scene of the last chapter was but one of the series of deadly and dreadful excitements which were now the habit of every day. The solemn frame of mind which it induced in Ellen was of a piece with the solemn nature of their existence; and she could talk of it with her husband at any time and not disturb the natural bent which their conversation took. They searched the neighborhood for the habitation of the unhappy mother and her family; and the marks of her footsteps on the dust of the soil enabled them to trace her to Hope, a village in the plain, two miles, or rather more, from the Peak.—She and her husband had used the church for their habitation, and, it seemed, had employed the same kind of precaution as Paulett to defend it, and conceal that it was their dwelling.

One entrance only was left, and the other aperatures blocked up; but all care was useless now, for death had set them free from pain and fear. On a bed beside the altar lay the body of a man, over which was spread a cloak of fur and velvet, which, in the lifetime of the world would, have been most precious. His eyes were decently closed, the curtains of the bed drawn round him, and the pillow which supported his head was marked with the pressure of another head, and with moisture which could have been only the tears of his wife. The floor of the church was in confusion, like the dwelling of one too much distracted with troubles to attend to what did not relate to it; but there was corn, which had served for food, and fuel heaped on a stone which had been a hearth—there was a drawing of a woman and a beautiful place; but these were cast into a corner, probably by the irritable hand of Despair. On a table stood empty cups, which had long, perhaps, been dry; the glass of one had been shivered, and the fragments lay on the floor; there were also a few books, neglected and covered with dust. In the churchyard were the marks of three recent graves; one of them had a stone at its head, on which was carved, with care, the name of Alfred, and the soil was fenced and supported with sticks, so as to preserve its shape over the body—probably it was that of the first child whom the parents had committed to the dust. Another was more hastily prepared, and no superfluous labor had been bestowed on it. This must be the last, when heart and health were both failing. Paulett and Ellen kneeled and prayed beside them, and rejoiced that the mother, too, was at rest after the long misery of this scene. They returned to their cave, and under the shadow of the rock near the old course of the brook laid both mother and child, covering their bodies with stones, and thinking more of the probable reunion in some unknown scene of the spirits of that family than of the distance which separated their graves on this earth.

And now, with a good store of diamonds, and with increasing skill and success in the resolution of them into water, both Paulett and Ellen looked upon the lives of all as safe for the present, and their thoughts were at liberty to wander to some other subject. They believed that they and their children were alone in the world; for every sign of life from other countries, as well as their own, had ceased. It was very long since any human tidings had come; and though, after men had done with each other, birds continued their migrations, these had now long been over, and the years passed away without bringing or sending a single wing. The course of the seasons, too, was strange and unnatural. It seemed as if the earth performed its usual course in the heavens, and kept its place and functions in the movements of the planets; days and nights varied in their length according to the season, and the heat of the sun was at one time of the year great, and at another weak; but much that depended hitherto on the constitution of the globe was suspended. There were no clouds in the sky, no dews dropping from the air, no reproduction in the earth. It seemed decayed, and dying of old age. Yet Paulett said a new existence would perhaps arise on this same scene, and from these same elements. Once before the earth had been reduced to eight persons by the action of water; and now the absence of the same element had brought it to four. Charles and Alice might be the destined parents of a new race, and those names that were so familiar now might become the venerable appellation of the founders of the third race of man. Ellen smiled and shook her head, looking at the boy and girl, who were building a house of pebbles; and both parents listened for a while to what they were saying. Charles recollected the house he had dwelt in before the great shipwreck of human life drove them to the cavern; and he was teaching Alice that there were rooms below and rooms above, and that he had heard how people like their father had carried great stones, and put them one on another to make these rooms. Alice persisted in making her house one hollow cavern, and the other she called Charles's house, and did not understand his recommendation.

"Charles is taking the part already of a teacher, in whom remains the traditionary knowledge of an old world," said Paulett, "and Alice represents the new inhabitants, who have their own rude copies of natural objects, but who will be open to the training [illegible] the learned man."

"The learned man will be their [illegible]," said Ellen." "They will glad[illegible] notions from him."

"Yes; but if it should [illegible] first generation must [illegible] live—they must be very [illegible] everything except a pate[illegible] and such habitations as can [illegible] appropriated most easily. They [illegible] be children in comparison to Charles a[illegible] their lives, if we can but succeed in giving him the ideas of the age we have lived in. Fancy, then, Ellen, increased to perhaps fifty inhabitants before he dies, a very old man coming round his chair to hear of the wonderful steam engine, and the use of the telescope, and to learn the art of printing, and the list of the different languages, which Romans, Frenchmen, Germans, Greeks used, and what lions were, and horses."

"Or, tell them how he and Alice escaped from the Great Drought," said Ellen. "But, alas! it is far more likely he and she will perish in it; and, then, of what use is this knowledge to him?"

"Why—his soul. 'It is a thing immortal like thyself;' and, if what he knows is of no use here, it will be useful elsewhere."

"What!" said Ellen, smiling; "are there railroads and telescopes in another world?"

"For aught I can tell. At all events, the powers that contrive them here may contrive something from the same principles hereafter."

"But we can tell nothing about the other world," said Ellen.

"Nay, this is *another world* to the stars; and if we know nothing about our destiny, the only way we have to judge is by what we actually are, and tend to be now. So, while life remains I will teach my boy all I know, and go on as a man of this world ought to do; then we shall be ready for everything."

Accordingly, Paulett every day carried on his son's education, as far as the boy's age permitted, and instructed him in all that he would have learned had the world been as it was formerly. Only like a man in shipwreck, looking forward to a desert island as his best hope, he dwelt most upon what would be most useful, supposing Charles (being preserved) to have to provide for the physical necessities of a new race of man. Next in order came science and arts, and it was easier to make him feel the merits of these than of the exploits of man, especially when they consisted of valor and of the deeds of conquerors; for the heroic virtues seemed to take a new character in the present circumstances of the world; and whereas they used to blaze in personal danger, and at the sound and applause of men, they now bur[illegible] the endurance of the worl[illegible] which, with all its terrors an[illegible] pressions, must be met by th[illegible] taining spirit rising superio[illegible] excess of physical injury. The boy's soul replied to the call upon it. He learned to look on the dangers before him, and to consider the possibility of escape with quiet calculation of chances. He inured himself to privation readily, and eagerly tried to spare his mother and Alice from it. He and his father, hand in hand, walked over the desolate land, realizing the idea that they were in fact spirits, superior to all physical things, and divided from spirits and their sphere only by their frail connexion with a body. They talked of virtue and duty, and how good it was to dwell in these painful bodies, since they were the place wherein virtue was practiced and duty learned; and the father taught the son that the opportunities occurred, not only in enduring the dissolution of the frame of present things, and in the untiring exertion to aid and support life in those who were of weaker sex that they, but in abiding, with even and cheerful temper, the vexations of every day, and in adorning as far as possible, as well as preserving life. The mother was heroic, good, and patient too. She brought her children, night and morning, to the mouth of the cavern, and there they all kneeled by Paulett, who prayed aloud with them and for them. Then Ellen made ready their meal, which must all be prepared without water, and which consisted of the stores from former harvests, of which there was abundance laid up in various houses; and the little Alice, who could run at her mother's side, learned to be useful in some matters, and patient and obedient. Charles played with her and taught her; and he himself, mere child as he was, grew merry in his play, and earnest; and many a time the profound silence of the earth was broken by the hearty laugh of children, which would ring out through the cavern and reverberate against its walls. They grew, and were perfect and beautiful in shape; their minds developed, and talents and virtues filled them. They were types of man and woman—the one bold and protecting, the other seeking for affection and defence. They flourished when means appeared inadequate to their support; and amid a paralysed world it was in them only that body and spirit seemed to unfold.

[CONCLUSION TO-MORROW.]

THE DISPATCH.

TERMS OF ADVERTISING.

One square, one insertion	$0 75
One square, two insertions	1 25
One square, three insertions	[illegible]
One square, six insertions	[illegible]
One square, twelve insertions	[illegible]
One square, one month	10 00
One square, two months	18 00
One square, three months	25 00

LOST, STRAYED AND FOUND.

DARING ROBBERY.—FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD.—On Wednesday night, the 6th instant, about half-past seven o'clock, my stable was entered and my CARRIAGE HORSES were stolen.—The horses are very fine, large black horses, well known in this city. One of them has each of his hinder ankles cut by striking with his shoes. The other was a Government horse, purchased by me from B. W. Green, and is marked on the right side of his neck, under the mane, with the letter S. He has also a projecting or Roman face.

I will pay fifty dollars for their recovery.

de 11—3t JAMES LYONS.

FOUND, several days ago, between Seventeenth street and Mechanicsville Turnpike, a small SORREL MARE; much mane and small white spot in face. The owner will please come forward, prove property, pay charges and take her away; if not, she will be dealt with according to law.

JOEL CLAYTON, Mechanicsville Turnpike, near Seward's [illegible].

de 11—3t*

FOR RENT.

FOR RENT, THE HANDSOME STORE AND DWELLING, on the north side of Broad, between Ninth and Tenth streets. It has recently been thoroughly repaired and renovated, forming a most beautiful store below, with glass front. The UPPER PART contains thirteen rooms, with all the usual appurtenances, OVENS, RANGE, &c. This is one of the most desirable pieces of property in the city for a first-class boarding-house, restaurant, or almost any business. An examination is requested. It will be rented for one or more years. Apply to

de 11—3t GRUBBS & WILLIAMS.

STORE FOR RENT.—Handsome STORE, on Ninth street, three doors from Main, for rent. Possession given immediately. Apply to REGNAULT & CO., Main street, between Eighth and Ninth.

de 11—1w

KEEP YOUR MONEY IN VIRGINIA! DUNN & DEBLF'S ALE, Manufactured at FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA, [illegible] surpassed by no American Ale; [illegible] family use. Wholesale Agents [illegible] WILLIAM T. KING & CO.

de 11—3m