DAILY DISPATCH.

VOL. 29--NO. 82. RICHMOND, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1865. PRICE, TWO CENTS.

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.

Richmond Dispatch.

WEDNESDAY.........DECEMBER 13, 1865.

THE GREAT DROUGHT.

A Thrilling Story.

[CONCLUDED.]

CHAPTER V.

Time passed on, and there was no change in the state of things. Still an unclouded sun; still the deep, intense blue sky; winds on the earth, but no moisture; and the whole frame of nature seemed crumbling into chaos. Paulett felt the strife with fate to be unequal indeed, and could scarcely comprehend that he and his family were truly survivors amid such destruction; but he resolved not to give in while the means remained to him, but to fight the fight out until overpowered by the material universe. He told Ellen that they must move to some place where they might hope to find more diamonds; and Ellen agreed, wishing, with Paulett, that the strife were over and the last agony suffered, and that they were among the free and disembodied spirits. London was their object; for there they might hope to find most of the materials of what was now the most precious of all things—water; and, providing as well as they could for their necessities by the way, they quitted the cavern and set off on their journey.

First came the father, carrying the little Alice in his arms; the boy held his mother by the hand, and they followed Paulett in his path. There was the delicate woman, the mother of all that remained alive of the human race, setting out on the desert, which she remembered but a few years before the scene of luxury and abundance. On her shoulder she carried a burthen, containing corn for their sustenance, and the brave boy took his share by bearing the jar of water which had been provided for their support on the journey; and thus the last family of mankind set out on their pilgrimage over the desolated earth. The unmitigated sun had made great rents in the sides of the hills, and, together with the wind, had broken up the roads, between which and the parched fields there was scarcely now any difference. Where there had been inclosures and hedges, the withered sticks had, in most places, yielded to the winds, and were scattered about the spot where they had stood. Here and there were the marks of fire, which had run along the country till some interval of the previous desolation had stopped it; and where this had been the case, the black, unsightly remains lay strewn over the surface, one further step advanced in dissolution than the dead world around. There was no want of habitations for their nightly shelter. Palaces and cottages, all alike, were open; all alike were silent and tenantless habitations. They might choose where they would. And the first day they did not go far, for Ellen and her children, with stout hearts, had not bodily strength for great fatigue, and were unused to the strong exertion they were now compelled to make. Towards evening, therefore, when they reached a house, with which Paulett and Ellen had once been familiar, they determined to rest there for the night. They pushed open the gates, which still swung on their hinges, and which admitted them to what had been a park, filled once with trees, and bathed with waters. A large wood covered the hill which rose on one side, and which now, under a summer sun, stood perfectly bare, and all of one uniform grey color as far as the view extended. On the other side, the eye looked over a tract of country varied with hill and dale, but desolate of every color that used to shine forth in light and shade. The setting sun shone among the leafless branches, casting long brilliant rays of light. The unclouded sky met the sparkling earth, and both glittered with unnatural brilliancy. To Paulett and Ellen everything spoke of desolation and death; and an exclamation escaped Ellen, in a low tone, that it was a piteous and horrible spectacle. But Charles, standing still at their side as they looked on the scene, cried, it was beautiful—the colors of the sun were so splendid on the fine white trees, and one could see so far, and everything was so white and shining on the earth. The parents felt that ideas were ceasing to be in common between the last and the first members of the old and the new generation; and, far from contradicting their boy, they tried to partake his pleasure and enter into his impressions. They moved on up to the old familiar door, and entered the open, silent hall, where they remembered the ceremonies and the courtesies of life. They chose among the rooms, which had been those of friends, and recognized familiar objects of their every-day existence. It was a conceit of Paulett's, for which he smiled at himself, to wind up the clock in the hall, and set it to toll out the time again for another week. There were musical instruments in a room adjoining, and over one of these Ellen timidly passed her fingers. It was out of tune, and the sounds, though sweet in themselves, all jarred with one another.

"That's the last music of the world, perhaps," said Ellen, "and all discord, too."

They found some small store of corn in one of the rooms; they prepared and ate it, and lay down to sleep, forgetting in fatigue all their dismal feelings, and in their dreams seeing the old state of things and dead persons—nay, a dead world—without wondering that they were to come to life again. All the days of their journey wore an uniform character, and they kept on and on through waste and ruin, glad to leave the country behind them, and expecting as some relief the aspect of streets and a town. They halted, at length, within a few miles of London, and lay down to rest, thankful to be so near their home; for they had suffered as much fatigue as they could well bear, and their stock of diamonds was waxing very low, and needed replenishment. Paulett continued busy preparing water from those that remained, after his wife and children were asleep. His own frame scarcely felt the exertion of the journey, and he was full of the thoughts with which the approaching sight of what had been once the great metropolis filled him. The vast untenanted dwelling place, the solitude of the habitation of crowds, the absence of mind and talent from the scene they had so filled—all these things excited his feelings, and gaining ground in the solitude of the night, he felt at last that he could not willingly delay his first meeting with the bereaved city, and that he should be pleased to have an opportunity of indulging alone the highly-wrought emotion with which he expected the sight of it. Accordingly, when the light began to break, he wrote word to Ellen that she should wait for him a few hours, and that he would be back in that time to lead her and the children to their journey's end; and then softly leaving the house, set forward eagerly on his way.

It was evening before he returned. He came in pale and excited; he took his children in his arms as usual, and seemed like one upon whom a thing he has seen has made a deep impression, but who either doubts the power of words to convey the same impression, or thinks that he himself is over-excited by it.

"Ellen," he said at last, "London is burned to the ground."

The sudden flush on her face, and her clasped hands while she spoke not, showed that the event touched her, too, as deeply as him; and then he went on freely:

"Oh, Ellen! if you had seen it! It stands there all in ruins—the whole city in ruins! It has been the work of some great storm, which fired it when all were gone or dead; for there has been no pulling down, no pillage, no aid, no attempt to stop the fire! All the palaces, all the museums, all the stores of learning and art, the streets, the crowded houses; they are gone, Ellen—they are all gone!"

His wife had never before, in all their misery, seen him so deeply moved—so nearly overpowered by anything that had occurred. His excitement communicated itself to her, and she caught the full bearing of his narration. She felt for the long ages of story, and the monuments of human skill, buried in the great city. Irretrievable ruin! The work which men and years and growing knowledge had slowly raised up, all dead, all annihilated so suddenly. They sat talking of it very long before Ellen said—

"And what must *we* do now, Paulett?"

"We must go on, Ellen; we must travel further. The rest we hoped for is destroyed with the city, and we must press forward if we are to save our lives."

"That seems less and less possible," said Ellen; "and in all this destruction, why should we be preserved?"

Perhaps because we have, as yet, avoided the stroke by using all our human skill; perhaps because a new race is to spring from us, who shall reign in another mighty London. Alas, London! alas, the great city!"

Several times during the night Ellen heard Paulett murmur to himself words of lament over the fallen city; and when he slept, his rest was agitated, and his frame seemed trembling under the emotions of the day.

It was resolved that Ellen should rest a little while in their present habitation before undertaking the toils of further travel.—They intended to make for the coast, sure of a dry channel to the opposite shore, and hoping to reach some of the great continental towns before their store of diamonds should be utterly exhausted. In the meantime Paulett was bent upon taking his boy through the ruins of London and impressing upon him the memory of the place and its great events. So, the next day, leaving Ellen and the little Alice together, he and Charles began their pilgrimage through the mighty ruins. The event must have occurred very many months ago, for the ruins were perfectly cold and the winds had toppled down the walls of all the more fragile buildings, so that the streets lay in confusion over one another, and it was impossible, except by other marks, to recognize the localities. Paulett and Charles clambered over the fallen walls, and would have been bewildered among the heaps of masonry and houses shaken from their base and blackened by fire, only that over the desolate prospect they saw, and Paulett marked the bearings of St. Paul's, the chief part of whose dome rose high in the air, though a huge rent let the daylight through it, and threatened a speedy fall. There was here and there a spire rising perfect over the ruins; there were remains of Whitehall, strong though blackened, seen over a long view of prostrate streets; and in the distance beyond, fragments of Westminster Abbey showed themselves in the sunlight, though defaced and crumbled as if the frame had been too ancient to resist the fire. Guided by these landmarks, Paulett traced out the plan of the city, and by degrees recognized where the great streets had run, where the palaces had stood, where the river had flowed—and all was silent, all an absolute stillness, where there had been such ceaseless voices and sounds of life. The libraries were burned, the statues calcined, the museums in ashes; the mind of man, which triumphs over the body, had here been subdued by matter, and left no trace of itself.

"Oh! London, London! So much talent, so much glory and beauty; such mighty hearts, such mighty works; such ages of story,—all buried in one black mass! Piteous spectacle!" cried Paulett, striking his breast and stretching forth his arms over the skeleton of what was once a sovereign in the world.

He took his son by the hand and led him over the confused masses, telling him as they went along what were the ruins by which they passed.

"This great heap of buildings which has fallen into the square must be the palace of our kings. It is that St. James's where they dwelt till nobler buildings rose with the improving times. See here, Charles, there is less ruin here. This open space was park and garden; and time has been that I have heard the buzz of men filling all this place when the sovereigns came to hold their courts in that building. I think that this dreadful fire must have taken place before life was quite extinct; for, see, there are heaps of bones here, as though men had fled together to avoid it; and it either overtook them with long tongues of fire, such as a burning city would send forth, or smothered them, before they could escape, with its smoke. Ha! I see almost a palace there—a wonder of modern art. It is the house I once saw, and only once, for it was built during the years of the great drought."

"Who could build in those days, father?" said Charles. "I thought no one had any heart for doing more than we do, and that is but just keeping ourselves alive."

"Nay, it was very long before the persuasion came that those were the last days. We all believed that rain would come again and restore the earth to its old order, and whoever possessed the means, builded and projected still. You may see this magnificent place suffered violence before the fire, for its ornaments are torn from the walls, and its statues mutilated by other means than the bare fall. It was the property of a man called Jephcot, who, when the water began to fail, contrived means to bring it into London from great distances, and thus to secure a supply when the ordinary means were useless. He kept his contrivance secret, and supplied the city when other men's resources were exhausted, and he grew exceedingly rich by this exercise of his ingenuity, and built himself the palace which you see there. But when the failure of water amounted to absolute famine, the rich people naturally were the last who wanted; they gave his price, and he supplied them before he would supply others who had no money to bring. This was endured with murmurs, which might have gone on a little longer had not Jephcot, in the midst of their distress, given a banquet to the great people of London.

It was in the second year of the drought, when, little thinking what the end was to be, we all continued to live, as far as possible, as we had done before. I was in London, where the Parliament was then sitting, and, among others, I was invited to this house; and still remember the scene of luxury and profusion of these bare rooms. In the midst of the noise of a crowded assembly, some of us heard sounds outside, which were such as you will never hear even if you live—sounds of the feet and voices of thousands of human beings. Among this tumult we began to distinguish individual voices, chiefly those of women, crying out "Water!" We paid little attention, and those who did, said the police and soldiers were called out and would prevent violence; but before long it was whispered that these forces, pressed by extreme want and seeing their families perishing, had joined the mob and were exciting violence. There fell a silence over all the assembly; every one left the tables and gathered together to hear and to consult; and while we did so, there came an assault on the front of the house, and the voices of the populace all broke out at once into shouting. They were irresistible; they forced their way in, and came pouring up the staircase; they uttered cries of vengeance for imaginary wrongs, saying that the water of London had been kept for the rich, and that there was an abundance for both rich and poor, and threatened the lives of Jephcot and his family even more eagerly than they demanded for water. He tried to address them, but they caught him down from the head of the staircase where he stood and flung him at once over the marble banisters. This was the signal for attack on all sides. We rushed forward to rescue his body and revenge him; they to possess themselves of the treasure they so much coveted. Of course we were overpowered, for we were one to fifty; and that night there fell a hundred of the nobles of England. The women were respected by the mob, and except one lady who was shot accidentally, and another, who saw her son fall, and stood over him till he ceased to breathe, then fell wounded and dying herself, all escaped. Your mother was not there. When our party was quite vanquished, I found myself in the midst of the mob, bleeding to death—as I thought; but they flung me on one side, and I recovered. They pulled the house to the ground after they had satiated themselves with drinking. And that was the first great calamity which overthrew the government of the country."

"And how did that come about father?" said Charles, eagerly holding him by the hand and sharing his excitement.

Paulett led him on, telling him, at one ruined monument after another, what steps had been taken at each in the destruction of the order of things. They came to the dry channel of the Thames, a deep and wide trench, whose bottom showed objects that had lain there when the waters flowed above, and which once would have been as precious as now they were unregarded. Here was a bridge from side to side; and a little way above, stood part of the walls of a noble building, partly black with smoke, partly white with the polish and beauty of stones newly built together.

"These are the Houses of Parliament," said Paulett, the work of many years, which were to replace those burned in 1834. See how beautiful they were, what excellent design, what exquisite finish; how strong and stable, to last for a thousand ages, and to crown the river which then flowed in this dusty channel. When matters were come almost to the worst, and there were convulsions all over the country in consequence of the famine, the queen, for the first time, came to these houses to open the last Parliament that ever assembled. There were no beasts of burthen then left alive in the country; it had been found impossible to appropriate water enough to those [illegible] had been reserved in the royal stables [illegible] Queen, surrounded by a certain numb[illegible] court, walked along yonder street to the House. The sight of so young a woman, and so great a sovereign, thus leveled by physical necessity with the meanest, excited some of the old enthusiasm with which she used to be greeted; the [illegible] place themselves, with their squalid faces, and in their extreme misery, greeted her; but the greatest feeling was aroused among the nobles and gentry, who surrounded her, and who seemed to make a point of offering more homage the less outer circumstances demanded it. There was assembled in the House all that remained alive of the nobles of England, and the sovereign; and they proposed to deliberate upon the possibility of any means remaining to provide water. But a demagogue of the people, Mathison by name, roused their fury and their madness, and they burst in, accusing their superiors of their calamities. The Queen's life was in danger; and then occurred a gallant action, which is worthy to live if man lives. A Churchill, a descendant of that Marlborough who fought Blenheim, came to the Hall whither they had broken in, and required, in the Queen's name, to know what they wanted. He meant to gain time, for other nobles had effected an exit at a private door for her, and were hurrying her away to a place of security till she could escape from England. They answered Churchill that water was monopolized; that Mathison must be minister; that they must speak to the Queen face to face, and have her hostage for the accomplishment of what they wished. Churchill pretended to deliberate for an instant with some one in the adjoining chamber, and then returning, said: 'If the Queen do not speak with you in ten minutes, you may tear me in pieces.' Some of the mob cried that he was saying this to give her time to escape; others said if it were so he should assuredly suffer the penalty. Churchill answered nothing, only smiled; and then the majority said he could not be so foolhardy, and they would grant him the ten minutes.

"The time passed, and Mathison eagerly cried, "The time is gone, yet we don't see the queen."

"Then tear me in pieces," said Churchill; and the mob, finding their prey had escaped, did so, indeed; the gallant man falling where he stood, and not another word coming from his lips.

"The brave man," cried Charles; "the good man! Were there many such brave, good men in the old world, father?"

"Ay, that there were," said Paulett, "many a glorious one; some known and some unknown, who did things which made one know one's self—a glorious and immortal creature. See, there, that ruined Abbey—there lay the ashes of brave and good; these are their crumbled monuments—'that fane where fame is a spectral resident.' Alas, there is no fame, no name left!"

Paulett and Charles went down among the ruins of the Abbey, and there, amidst the fallen stones and broken aisles, saw monumental marbles, old known names and funeral inscriptions, contrasting strongly, by their quiet character, with the confusion around.

"Never forget them, Charles," said Paulett. "These are names which the world has trembled at, and which are now like to be such as those before the flood, barbarous to those who are building up a new order of things, and known merely as a barren catalogue of names. Yet, if you live, remember Edward, the King, here; remember the Black Prince; remember the days and heroes of Elizabeth; remember the poetry and the romance of the old world."

"Ay, father; and I'll remember the great name of him who taught you to print, and of Wickliffe, the reformer, and of the man who gave you the steam engine."

Paulett smiled and sighed; he felt that his own ideas of things heroic were as much contrasted with those of Charles as their notions of the beautiful. But he thought not to stem the stream.

"See here," he said, pointing to some new monuments which, like the old, were cracked by fire; "there were many brave and good actions done, and one of those who did best was laid here. He was a clergyman—his name, Host; and during the pestilence, which came on in the fourth year, he was more like an inspired messenger of good than any mortal creature. You must know, Charles, that the teachers of religion, at this time, were greatly divided among themselves, and they had led a great portion of the lay world into their disputes. One party, in an age of reasoning, and when nothing in science was taken upon trust, gave up their reason altogether, and followed authority as blindly as they could, still, however, feeling the influence of the age; for they would argue upon the existence or non-existence of authority, and would fit it, unconsciously, each man to his conceit. Indeed, superstition was the disease of the age, and while the healthy part of the community employed and enjoyed the freest use of their reason, this same infirmity appeared among other people in other forms; so that some men took up the notion that the human mind might act independently of sense and see without eyes, and know intuitively what existed at a distance. Other parties, among professors of religion, allowed nothing in religion that they allowed daily in the evidence of other matters. They gave no weight to research, and thought about religious facts, and dreamed that each one among themselves gained a kind of spiritual knowledge by inspiration. It was a time of conceits and quakery; but there was a better spirit abroad, of which this man, Host, was the representative. He began in the pestilence, and went to all houses indifferently, whether they were princes or peasants; and there was a common sense in what he did and said, a universal character in his religion, which struck men in these evil days. They drew nearer to each other under his influence; and I recollect this great building thronged in one of the last months that men continued here with a congregation of all orders and all division of opinion, who met to pray together and listen to Host. He stood yonder, Charles; as nearly there, I think, as I can tell from the ruins; he was rapt by his own discourse, and his face was as the face of an angel. And, truly, three days after, he was dead; and here they buried him—the last sound of the organ, the last service of this church, being for him. Here is his name still on the tombstone.

"HOST.
Pio dilecto beato.
Populus miserrimus."

Charles's memory was deeply impressed with this history, and he followed his father, much engrossed and animated by what he had heard. Not so Paulett; for the ruins of London occupied his mind, and filled him with deep pity and regret for the fair world destroyed; and so they returned to their temporary habitation—the father sorrowful, the son exulting; one full of the old world, one dreaming great actions for the new.

After another day's rest the sole surviving family of mankind set forth again on their pilgrimage. Paulett again carried his Alice, and Ellen and Charles walked hand in hand with such a basket of necessaries as they could support. Paulett secured about his person a large packet of diamonds, collected in palaces and noble dwellings near London, and the apparatus he required for transmuting them into water; and searching for and finding the remains of the railroad to the coast at Hover, they kept on in that track, which, from its evenness, offered facility to their journey. But in several places it had been purposely broken up during the commotions which proceeded the final triumph of the drought, and the tunnel near Folkestone had fallen in the middle from want of the necessary attention to the masonry. These difficulties seemed harder to bear than those which they had met with in the beginning of their pilgrimage, when their hopes of reaching a certain bourne were more secure. The destruction of London had thrown a deep gloom over all their expectations; and besides, that help was removed to a much greater distance, they could not but feel it very probable that a similar fate might have befallen the other places they looked to. Nevertheless, none of them murmured. They went steadfastly though sadly on; and the two children, with less knowledge of what was to be feared, were encouraged by their parents whenever they broke into a merrier strain. Alice was the happiest of the party, for she knew least. She was the one who suffered least, also; for every one spared her suffering and contrived that what remained on earth of luxury should be hers. She had the first draught of water; she was carried on her father's shoulders; she ran to find pebbles and whatever shone and glittered on their path; and when the others were silent, they heard with joy her infant voice singi[illegible]ithout words, like a bird, in a covered [illegible] they got wearily over mile by mile o[illegible] way. Ellen suffered most, though Paulett tried, by all means that remained, to lighten her fatigue and cheer her spirit. She bore up steadfastly, but her frame was slight and her feelings were oppressed by the fearful aspect of things around her. They made a deeper impression, and she was fain to look steadfastly on the faces of the few living to recover from the effects of such universal death.

Paulett himself was shaken more than he knew, though he was as energetic as ever; but Charles was vigorous, and advanced beyond his years, and took more than his share in aiding and in comforting. They came at last to what had been sea coast, and to that part of the road which ran along the face of the cliff overlooking the sea; and here they paused and gazed upon the strange and wild view before them. Where the sea had stretched all glorious in motion, expanse and color, there was now a deep valley, the bottom of which was rough with rocks, black for the most part, but in places glittering with the white salt from which the water had evaporated and which the winds had rolled together. Further out from the coast, where the sea had been deepest, there seemed tracks of sand; and far away over this newly exposed desert rose other hills, clearly seen through the unclouded atmosphere, and which they knew to be the rocks of France, and if they should arrive there, what was the hope they offered? Scarce any—nothing but more pilgrimage. Further wandering, Paulett and Ellen sat apart while the children lay sleeping, side by side, for an hour or two, at this point of their journey, and talked over the desolation before them.

"Yet," said Paulett, "the more terrible is the appearance which material things put on, the greatar I feel the triumph of the spirit to be. The worse it looks, the more immortal I feel; and when a perishing world shows itself most perishable, I exult most that you and I, Ellen, have borne it so far."

"Yes, I am glad too," said Ellen; "your strength strengthens me. In the midst of this desolation the mind rises, for an hour an least, higher, perhaps, than it would have ever done if we had been prosperous."

"Yet we might have used our prosperity to the same good end," said Paulett. "It is not necessary to be miserable in order to be noble. Millions have died before us—some in agony, some before the struggle began; some hardly, some at ease; they had all their chances; all had their occasions of virtue, if they used them, and some used them, some failed; ours is not over yet; we have to struggle on still; and let us do it, dear Ellen, and be ready for the good day when we, too, may be allowed to die." And thus talking for a while, they rested themselves in sight of the desert they had to traverse; then, with renewed strength and steadfast resolution, when the children woke, descended the cliffs, and prepared to trace out a path through what had been the bottom of the sea. The first part of the journey was infinitely difficult; the rocks over which the foot of man had never passed; the abrupt precipices over which had flowed the even surface of the ocean, and then the height to climb again, again to find themselves on ledges and shelves of rock; all these seemed at times hardly passable impediments. And when they got to a distance from what had been the shore, the unnatural place where they found themselves pressed upon the imagination. There was a plain of sand, about which, at irregular distances, rose rocks, which, north and south, stretched out beyond the reach of the eye; and this sand, which had been at such a depth that it never felt the influence of the waves, was covered in places with shells, the inhabitants of which had perished when the waters gradually died away. There lay mixed with these some skeletons of fishes; here a huge heap and there small bones, which looked less terrible; and masses of sea weed, dried and colorless, under which, as it seemed, the creeping things of the ocean had sheltered for a while, and some had crawled to the surface when about to perish. But it was not only the brute creation which had died here; there was in the middle a pile of rocks, on one side of which they came suddenly to a pit, so deep and dark that they perceived no bottom; and here probably there had been sea-water longer than elsewhere, for there were human bones about it, and skulls of men, and human garbs, which the sun had faded, but which were not disturbed by waves. There was a cord and a metal jar attached to it, for lowering into the pit; but Paulett, as he looked at the attitudes of the remaining skeletons, and observed how they seemed distorted in death, fancied that they must have brought up either poisoned water, or waters so intensely salt as to drive them mad with the additional thirst; and that some had died on the instant, some had lingered, some had sought to succor others, and yielded, sooner or later, to the same influence. Ellen and he would not dwell on the sight after the first contemplation of it; they passed on, shuddering, and made toward the great wall of rock which they saw rising to the south, and which mus be their way to the land of France. Bu before they reached it, the sun began to decline; and without light it was in vain to attempt to seek a path. There was a wind, keener than they had felt of late, which came from the west, and the little Alice pressed on her father's bosom to shield her from it. He wrapped her closer in a cloak, and they resolved to put themselves under the shelter of the first rock they reached, and pass the night in the channel of the sea. They pressed on, and found, at last, the place they sought—a cliff, which must once have raised its head above the waves, and which now stood like some vast palace wall, bare and huge, upon the ocean sand. Screened from the wind, they collected an abundance of the dried vegetation of the sea, partly for warmth and to roast their corn, partly for Paulett to dissolve some of the diamonds into water; and here they rested, here they slept, many fathoms below that level over which navies used to sail. At times during the night Paulett fancied, when the wind abated, that he heard a sound like thunder, or like what used to be the rushing of a distant torrent; and occasionally he thought he felt a vibration in the earth, as if it were shaken by some moving body. The region he was in was so strange that he knew not what might be here or what about to happen; the sounds so imperfect that he tormented himself to be sure of them, or to be sure they were not; and when the time for action came he was beginning to disbelieve them altogether; but Alice brought all back again by saying:

"My rock" (for her cradle was a rock) "shook my head, father."

The child could explain herself no further; but the vibration he had fancied seemed to be what she had felt. And now they climbed again, and again descended, weary, rock after rock; it was a strange chaos, which the tides had swept and moulded, and which had, in places, risen to the surface and caused the wreck of many a vessel. Fragments of these lay under the rock they had split upon, but the wandering family had no thoughts for them; wonder and pity had been exhausted among exciting and terrific scenes. They thought only of forcing their way over the rocks; and feared to think how much of this they had to traverse before they should come to what had been the shore and to towns.

Suddenly, as they toiled forward, Paulett said in a low voice to Ellen, "Don't you hear it?"

"I have heard it a long time," said Ellen, in the same tone; and Charles, as well as they, said, "Father, what is that?"

"I can't tell, my boy," said Paulett, listening.

"Water?" asked Ellen.

Paulett shook his head, yet they all pressed forward, and there grew a thundering, sullen sound. There was a valley and a ridge of rock before them, and they had to clamber first down the rugged precipice they were upon, then to cross the valley, and then to struggle up the opposite side—a trembling motion growing perceptible as they advanced—before they stood on a sort of a broad ledge, which they perceived at the angles that jutted out went down straight into a depth, and opposite which was another broad table-land of rock, between which and that they were upon was a rent, wider and narrower in the various parts, and running along, as far as they could see, to right and left. Paulett rushed on to the brink, and stood looking. He put his hand out to keep Ellen back, when he heard her close behind; but she also sprang to the edge, and when she had seen, turned to catch Charles in her arms. Rushing past was a torrent, but not water. It was dark, thick, pitchy; it sent up hot streams to the edge; it was one of the secrets of nature, laid bare when the ocean was taken away. Fire seemed to be at work below, for occasionally it would boil with more violence, and rushed on with an increased, increasing noise, then sullenly fall back to the first gloomy sound. It bewildered the sense; and though it could threaten no more than death, yet it was death with so many horrors around it that the body and mind both shrank from it. How was it possible, too, to cross it? Yet their way lay over it, for behind was certain destruction, and before it was not yet proved impossible that they might find the element of water. Paulett felt that it would not do to linger on the brink; he drew his family away from the sight, and he himself went up and down to find some narrower place, and some means by which to make a bridge over the abyss; and it was not till their assistance could avail him that he returned for them and brought them to the place where he hoped to get over. It was a fearful point, for in order to reach a space narrow enough to have a chance of throwing a plank over, it was necessary to go down the broken side of the precipice some twenty feet, and there, high above the seething lava, to cross on such a piece of wood as could be got to span the abyss, and then clamber up the rugged opposite side. Paulett had been down to the point he selected, and had got timber, which a wrecked vessel had supplied, to the edge, so that Ellen and Charles might push a plank down to him, and he might try, at least, to cast it to the opposite bank. His head was steady, his hand strong. No one of them spoke a word while he stood below, steadying himself to receive the plank. Ellen's weak arm grew powerful, her wit was ready with expedients to aid him in this necessity; her frame and spirit were strung to the very uttermost, and she was brave and silent, doing all that could be done. No word was spoken till Paulett said: "I have done it," and Ellen and Charles had seen him place the plank and secure it on his own side of the abyss with stones. Then they held their breath, beholding him cross it; but his firm foot carried him safely, and he heaped stones on the other side also. He came over again, sprang up the side, and now smiled and spoke.

"After all, it is but a mountain torrent, Ellen," he said, "and the water would have destroyed us like yonder seething flood; yet, we have crossed many a one and feared nothing. Now, Charles, shall go over; then Alice, and he shall take care of her; and then my Ellen. The ground beyond is better; we shall get on well after this."

Ellen took the girl in her arms, and stood, not trembling, not weeping, seeing and feeling every motion; all was safe that time, again. Charles was on the opposite bank, and his father waved his hand to Ellen. He came back for Alice, whom her mother tied on his shoulders, for hands as well as feet were wanted to scramble down and up the banks. And now Ellen followed to the brink, and forgot, in watching her husband and child pass over, that the black torrent was seething beneath her eyes. When they were quite safe, she felt again that it was there, and that her eyes were growing dizzy, and her hands involuntarily grasping about for support. She did not take time to feel more, but sprang upon the plank, and over it, and found Paulett's hand seizing hers, and drawing her up the opposite bank.

And once there, with all three round her, she burst into tears—tears which had not overcome her through many miseries—and embracing them alternately, blessed them, that they were all so far safe. Paulett suffered this emotion to spend itself before he said that he must cross the plank again. To be more at liberty to assist them, he had left the diamonds on the other side till they should be over. Ellen offered no remonstrance. The times had so schooled them all that selfish or unreasonable thoughts either did not come at all, or were suppressed at once; and she did not oppose, even with a word, this necessary step. But the renewal of fear after the excited energy had subsided did her more harm than all that had gone before; and she stood on the brink exhausted, yet palpitating again while Paulett made the passage. He himself was wearied; but he had reached the plank, and was upon it on his way back in safety. when one of those ebullitions which stirred the dark fluid began roaring down the cleft rock, and with stunning noise sent up dark and clouding vapor. Paulett seemed suffocating—he could not be heard—he could just be seen—he reeled! Has he fallen? Oh! he has fallen! No, no! he has got his footing again; he forces himself up the bank; he is safe—but the diamonds are in the bottom of the pit.

CHAPTER VI.

The exhausted family toiled with difficulty over the remaining passage to what had been the main land, and reached a village on the former coast, under a roof of which they entered, and lay down on the floor of the first room they came to. Their supply of water was almost out; the materials for producing more were gone; and there seemed little chance of finding any in the neighborhood. "Death was here;" and yet the exhaustion of their frames led them to sleep before they died, and to seek and enjoy a taste of that oblivion which was soon to fall upon them with an impenetrable shroud. All but Ellen were soon asleep; but she, the most wearied of all, could not close her eyes and admit rest to her over-wrought frame. There was a burning thirst in her throat, which the small portion of water she and the rest had shared—being all that remained for them—had failed to slake. She had not complained of it; but she rejoiced when she heard them sleep, that she could rise and move restlessly about. The night was hot, and yet the west wind continued to blow strongly; the moon shone, but scarcely with so bright a light as usual—there was a film upon it, or, perhaps, Ellen thought it was the dimness of her own weary eyes. She came softly up to Paulett, and watched his frame, half-naked in the unconsciousness of sleep, and upon which none of the ravages of want and exertion were now concealed. The flesh was wasted; the strong chest showed the bones of the skeleton; the arms which had so strained their powers were thin, and lay in an attitude of extreme exhaustion. His sleep was deep; his lips open; his eyelids blue; he would wake in want; and soon he would be able to sleep no more till the last sleep of all came in torment and anguish. Poor Charles lay by him, his head on his father's body for a pillow, his limbs drawn somewhat together, his clusters of brown hair parted off his pale, thin cheek; and Alice, the darling Alice, with more color in her face than any of them, slept in deep repose, destined perhaps to live last, and to call in vain on those whose cares hitherto had kept her healthier and happier than themselves. The mother groaned with anguish; she measured what these were about to suffer by all she began to suffer herself, and the sight of them seemed to sear the burning eyes which could no longer weep. She sat down on the floor by Alice; her head fell against the wall; she caught at a little rosary which hung near her and pressed it in her mouth, the comparative coolness of the beads giving her a little ease. Her face fell on her bosom.

When Paulett woke out of his deep sleep, and as soon as he stirred, the little Alice came on tip-toe across the floor to him, and said, "Hush, father, my mother is asleep at last."

"At last, my Alice! What! Could she not sleep?"

"I think she could not sleep. I woke up, and there was my mother; and Charles woke presently, and she said, 'Charles, go out and try to bring back some cold stones in a cup,' and then presently she sat down again, and went to sleep."

He rose softly, and taking the little girl by the hand, came up to Ellen's side, and looked upon her. She was lying at full length on the floor, her head was toward him, but her face was turned upon the ground, and her hair further hid it; her right arm was fallen forward, and the back of that hand lay in the palm of the other. He did not hear nor see her breathe. "Is it so, my Ellen?" he said. "Art thou at rest? Is there no farewell for me?" He kneeled, and stooped lower and lower. His lip did not venture to feel hers; he longed that she might be free, yet shrank from knowing that she was gone. But no; she had not ceased to suffer; a low sigh came at last, and her parched mouth opened.

"Water!" she said; then lifted her eyes and saw Paulett, and remembered all by degrees. "Is not there a little? Oh, no—none! Nay, I shall not want it soon!" She turned her face on Paulett's breast, and soon after tried to rise and push herself from him. "Leave me, dear husband; kiss me once and leave me; try to same *them!*"

But Paulett folded his arms round her. "Not so, my Ellen; the chances of life are so little that it is lawful for me to give them up unless we can all seek them together. Alas! all I can do is but to see thee die! Oh! if I could give thee one minnte's ease!"

"Alas! you must all die like this," said Ellen, who was perishing like one of the flowers that had died in the drought for want of rain. Water could have saved that life, spared those sufferings. That burning hand, those gasping lips, those anxious eyes, revealed what the spirit, passing away in that torment, would fain have concealed. "Alice, come near me, hold my hand Alice. Are you thirsty, poor child? Oh, do not grieve your father! It will be but a short time, my little girl; be patient." Ellen tried to kiss her; her husband kneeled and raised her head on his shoulder, bending his face on her forehead, and murmuring the last farewell—the last thanks—the agony of his pity for her suffering. The poor child threw herself on her mother, gazing upward, in want and grief and bewilderment, in her face. "My Charles," said the mother, feeling about with the other hand, but she did not find his head to bless it. "My Charles," she repeated in a fainter tone, and her eyelids drooped over the hot eyes.

Paulet saw nothing but his suffering wife, heard nothing but her painful breath.

At that moment the door opened, and Charles stood there, paler than ever, with glittering eyes. He held the cup towards his father. "Father," he said, "there is wate coming down from Heaven!"

Paulett looked up and cried, "O God, it rains!"

V.

THE DISPATCH.

TERMS OF ADVERTISING

One square, one insertion	$0 75
One square, two insertions	1 25
One square, three insertions	1 75
One square, six insertions	3 00
One square, twelve insertions	5 50
One square, one month	10 00
One square, two months	18 00
One square, three months	25 00

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, at 7.40 A. M. Arrive at Danville at 5.10 P. M.
Leave Danville daily, Sundays excepted at 6.20 A. M. Arrive in Richmond at 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 Greeesboro', 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.

THE NATIONAL EXPRESS AND TRANSPORTATION COMPANY, OFFICE ON MAIN STREET, BETWEEN THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH, RICHMOND, VA., ARE NOW PREPARED TO FORWARD CURRENCY, COIN, VALUABLES AND FREIGHT TO POINTS NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST. The tariff of charges is based upon fair business principles, without being oppressive to the public.
Goods shipped from the North by steamships and marked to the care of the National Express and Transportation Company will be promptly forwarded to destination *free of charge for commission or drayage*.
Goods called for *without charge* and promptly forwarded.
All desired information in regard to the extent of the lines operated by this company furnished at any of the agencies on application.
J. E. JOHNSTON, President.
J. D. IMBODEN, General Superintendent.
de 13—ts

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
de 11—10t STYLL & DAVIS.