A CHRISTMAS TRAGEDY.

Being an Account of the Burning of the Old Richmond Theatre in 1811.

It was a night in Christmas week, Thursday, December 26, 1811, when there occurred in Richmond, Va., a catastrophe memorable in the annals of the country, affecting as it did a whole State, and of which almost every old Virginia family retains to this day some tradition or memorial. When the news of the disaster reached Washington, December 30th, both Houses of Congress passed a resolution to wear a badge of mourning for thirty days, probably the only instance on record of such action on such an occasion, by the legislative branch of the Federal Government.

The capital of the Old Dominion was celebrating the Christmas season in 1811 with the usual festivities of ball-room and playhouse. But an especial interest was felt in the play running at the theatre—the one theatre of the town. And this was the last week of the company's appearance, and Thursday the benefit night of one of the prominent actors. The play, "The Father, or Family Feuds," had been translated from the French of Diderot by one of Richmond's most accomplished scholars, Louis H. Girardin, French political refugee, historian of Virginia, and principal of the famous Richmond Academy.

"The play passed off to the entire satisfaction of the audience," wrote one who was present, "and the afterpiece had progressed to the second act. Mr. Vest, whose comic powers have long amused the people of Richmond, was on the stage; general glee and hilarity had thrown the house into wild ecstacy. In a minute the scene is changed; Robertson bursts on the stage and in a horrible voice announces fire.

"The sad sequel I will not attempt to describe; its misery I can feel, but never can portray. Suffice therefore to say that wild despair and precipitate alarm apparently transfixed hundreds to the floor. Some thus situated met furious death unconscious of his approach; others were borne lifeless and hurled lifeless from the windows. Two minutes had not elapsed ere the theatre was filled with smoke and flames, the candles extinguished and one fourth of the persons who had gone to the play were on fire."

The house was crowded that December night with the fashion, the beauty, the talents of the town. In the distinguished audience might have been found all that was eminent in the official and social life of Richmond, besides visitors from other parts of the State, statesmen, scholars, and brilliant women. And amongst those who lost their lives on that fatal night were the wife, daughter, and a number of the pupils of Monsieur Girardin, the translator of the play. The heroine of the afterpiece, "The Bleeding Nun," was the beautiful Mrs. Green, and a touching account is given of her distress, when on escaping through a door behind the scenes, she discovered that her only daughter, a young girl, who was with some friends in one of the boxes, could not be found.

In her stage attire the mother ran distractedly from house to house seeking her child, clinging to the hope that she might have been rescued and carried home by some of her acquaintances. Two actors, who were in this company of "Virginia Comedians" were the parents of the great poet, Edgar Allen Poe. These were David Poe and the fascinating Elizabeth Arnold, whom he had married six months after the death of her first husband. They both died in Richmond, very nearly at the same time, about two weeks before the night of the fire.

The Governor of Virginia, George William Smith, the president of the Bank of Virginia, Abraham B. Venable, Benjamin Botts, one of the eminent counsel engaged in the trial in Richmond of Aaron Burr, in 1807, were among those who lost their lives at this time.

With Mr. Botts perished his wife and others of his family. He was last seen standing near them, calmly consigning to a friend the care of an infant child that had been left at home. Mr. Venable, it was said, had escaped more than once, but in his repeated efforts to save others was at length lost himself. Governor Smith had with him his wife and son, the latter a boy of 9 or 10. When the alarm of fire was given, the Governor led his wife out into the box lobby and then returned for his son. When he reached the lobby again, with his child, his wife was no longer there, having been impelled onward by the crowd against her will. Her husband, after putting his son in a place of safety, returned to search for his wife. She, in the meantime, having reached a window which was broken open, jumped out, a distance of fifteen or twenty feet, escaping with no serious injury. But the devoted husband, unknowing of her rescue, met his own death in the generous attempt to find her. Some of the agony and the pain of this long-past tragedy seems to linger yet in the old yellow manuscrips that relate the story. One of these is a letter written by Robert Greenhow, a Richmond merchant, to a friend in the country. It is dated February 7, 1812, and gives a vivid picture of Mr. Greenhow's efforts to save his wife and child, and of his heart-rending grief at the loss of his life-companion. He writes: "* * * Yes, my good sir, I can truly say that though I have sustained losses poignant and heart-rending, in children who, at different ages, had linked themselves fast to my very inmost soul, yet I never experienced a shock, a blow so severe as the present. * * * My wife, and friend of my heart, of my best and warmest affections, in the full tide of health, looking better than I had seen her for some months; my wife for near 26 1-2 years, with whom I had enjoyed as much of connubial bliss as ever fell to the lot, I dare venture to pronounce, of any one pair, suddenly and in a moment, unlooked for and unexpected taken, without one sad, last parting adieu, from my very arms! For she was then sitting on the front seat of the third box from the stage, reclining upon me, my arms encircled her waist. So soon as the first flakes were seen to descend, 'Save my child,' she cried, the last words I heard her pronounce. I caught my son up, and in a minute, pressed to suffocation we were immovably planted in the midst of a pressing, overwhelming throng, where for the space, I suppose, of four minutes we were. Then, with him in my arms, thrown to the floor; while thus prostrate, a blast of flame and smoke was inhaled by us both, and so great was its influence, that my arms let go their hold.

FROM AN OLD WOOD CUT IN HOWE'S HISTORY, OF VIRGINIA, BURNING OF OLD RICHMOND THEATRE.

My son, in a convulsive throe, wrested himself from my grasp, and exclaimed, 'O, father! I am dying!' This roused me from my state of almost insensibility, and my reply was, 'My son, I will die with you!' Dark as midnight, my hand involuntarily seized the skirt of his coat. I got him again in my hold, when we were able to rise. I gave to my body a sudden impulse that carried me over the dead and dying bodies, and pieces of flaming wood, that the steps were crowded with, and in that manner, with him in my arms, I got to the lower floor; when reanimated by the air rushing in at the doors, I got up, and most miraculously and unhurt, placed myself and child out of danger. I instantly returned to search for my wife! But death and destruction inevitable urged me back. Where my wife was, whether saved or not, I could not tell! I knew only that Dr. Greenhow had taken her under his care. But, Oh, sad to tell! The fatal mandate had issued!"

As there were distracted mothers seeking for their children, and faithful husbands striving to rescue their wives, so there were lovers sharing a common peril, one pair of whom we hear being happily saved, while another romantically perished together. Mr. Robert Stanard, after heroic efforts, succeeded in extricating his betrothed, a Miss Craig, but her sister, who was with her, was lost. The ill-starred lovers who were killed were Lieutenant Gibbon and Miss Conyers. The latter was the niece of Mrs. Gallego and lived with her aunt. Just opposite to them, on the same street, was the residence of Major Gibbon, an old officer of the Revolution. Lieutenant Gibbon, his son, was in the navy, and had distinguished himself in the war with Tripoli. His mother and his ladylove were both in the theatre. Filial duty led him first to the rescue of his mother, and having saved her he returned for Miss Conyers. But it was too late and they died in each other's arms.

Two incidents are related of ladies who were saved by means of their long and abundant hair. One of them, Julia Wickham, became afterwards the wife of the celebrated lawyer and statesman, Benjamin Watkins Leigh. The other lady, Miss Homoselle, who seems to have been something of a coquette, had two lovers paying her attention at this time. One of them, a Dr. Thornton, she had just rejected, the other upon whom she seemed to look more favorably, had taken her to the play. The rejected suitor wandered disconsolately 'round the theatre that night, unwilling to go in where he would see his rival in the company of the lady he loved. When the cry of fire was heard he was near at hand, and, rushing to one of the windows he caught sight of Miss Homoselle, who, in the confusion had become separated from her escort. He called to her to let down her hair, and winding his hand tightly in the heavy braids, he lifted her up through the window and bore her safely down on the other side, and then and there, so the tale runs, he addressed her again, while her heart was warm with gratitude, and she soon afterwards became Mrs. Thornton.

The rescue of ten or twelve ladies was effected through the combined exertions of Dr. James McCaw, an eminent Richmond physician, and Gilbert Hunt, a negro blacksmith. Both were of Herculean size and strength. Gilbert had been employed by Mrs. George Mayo to go to the theatre in search of her daughter, and on reaching the building he recognized at one of the widows Dr. McCaw, who had just succeeded in breaking out the sash. The doctor told him to stand under the window and catch those he should let down. One after another the poor women within reach of the good doctor's strong arms were in this way saved, Gilbert catching them as they were lowered out of the widow. The last of these, as if to reward the philanthropic physician, proved to be his own sister. She, however, was, like her brother, of formidable size, and Gilbert, though he caught her, fell with her, but neither of them were injured. The doctor now sought to escape himself, but in jumping from the window of the already tottering wall, he caught his leather gaiter in an iron projection, and hung suspended for some minutes in great pain and peril. He at length fell, but was lamed for life. The faithful Gilbert dragged him to a place of safety just in time to save him from being crushed by the wall, which fell a few moments later. A sad death at this time was that of a young girl of 17, Maria Nelson, daughter of Colonel Hugh Nelson, of Yorktown, and sister-in-law of Francis Walker, of "Castle Hill," Albemarle county. Her remains were identified by means of a gold watch of her brother-in-law's, which she wore that night, and which is still in possession of the family.

It is in a great crisis, a period of mortal peril, that character is manifested, and the brave man is distinguished from the coward. Among the brave that night was a Mr. Marshall, who, after saving a number of ladies by dropping them from a window, at length was about to jump out himself, when a woman frantic with terror clasped him about the neck, falling with him. He was killed and she was saved. But another type of our frail human nature was to be found here. A young girl who had gone with a large party to the play, became separated from her friends, and making one of a dense mass of people who were shoving and pushing one another in the mad struggle to escape. It was with difficulty she could keep her footing. Many near her were thrown down and trampled upon. As the crowd surged to and fro, the lady suddenly saw beside her a gentleman of her acquaintance, a young man well-known in society, and highly thought of, one of the fashionable beaux of the day. Mechanically, and without a thought of detaining him, yet doubtless with a vague sense of possible protection, she put out her hand and laid hold of the skirt of the gentleman's coat. To the young girl's amazement he drew out a penknife from his pocket and in an instant had cut off the coat skirt and passed on, leaving the severed portion in the lady's hand. Both were among the saved, and naturally the lady never forgot the incident. In her old age she would often tell the anecdote, showing the cut piece of coat which she had preserved as a memento. But with high-minded generosity, she never revealed the name of the man who had proved himself such a dastard. But how must he have gone in mortal dread the rest of his days lest his cowardice should come to light!

A church was built a few years later on the site of the theatre, and the remains of seventy persons of those who perished on that fatal December night lie interred beneath the portico at the church's entrance, a marble monument above them being inscribed with their names. For three generations pious worshippers have knelt in prayer over the spot where these scenes were enacted, parts in the dreadful drama which had followed so suddenly on the counterfeit presentment of passion. And hymns and orisons go up to-day at this holy Christmas season on the consecrated ground where once stood the Richmond theatre.

KATE MASON ROWLAND.

100 Doses For One Dollar

Economy in medicine must be measured by two things—cost and effect. It cannot be measured by either alone. It is greatest in that medicine that does the most for the money—that radically and permanently cures at the least expense. That medicine is

Hood's Sarsaparilla

It purifies and enriches the blood, cures pimples, eczema and all eruptions, tired, languid feelings, loss of appetite and general debility.

"I have taken Hood's Sarsaparilla and found it reliable and giving perfect satisfaction. It takes away that tired feeling, gives energy and puts the blood in good condition." MISS EFFIE COLONNE, 1535 10th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

Hood's Sarsaparilla promises to cure and keeps the promise.

A Hint to Santa Claus.

(Written for the Dispatch.)

Merry Christmas, merry Christmas, dear old Santy,
For I hear your reindeer dashing through the snow,
You are bringing me my book and doll, and tea-set,
With oranges and candy, too, I know;
But I've stolen down the staircase just to tell you
That if you really, truly wouldn't mind,
There are some things that you have there in your pocket,
That I rather wish you wouldn't leave behind.

You see, last year, when Ben and I were merry,
Oh, so merry with the stocking and the tree,
Mamma was sad, and grandma wiped her glasses
And Nellie, why she just cried dreadfully;
And papa had an awful, awful headache,
And couldn't shoot Ben's fireworks, after all,
And Dick, that's Nellie's sweetheart, sent a message
To say that he was sick and couldn't call.

So next morning Ben and I crept close to Nellie
And I said, "Now, what's the reason, honor bright,
That when Ben and I were merry, oh! so merry,
You were all so dull and sad on Christmas night?
Did Santa Claus not bring you what you wanted?"
Then she smiled (her eyes were very sweet and shy),
And she said it was your bringing too much eggnogg,
And too much punch, and wine, that made her cry.

And after that Nell's wedding didn't happen,
And she prays as much as grandma, mighty near,
Ben thinks she means to wait and know for certain,
How much eggnog you are going to bring this year;
And Dick is looking very queer and quiet;
So Santy, if you won't mind, from your pack,
Please leave the books and dolls, the toys and playthings,
But take the Christmas punch and eggnogg back.

KATE TUCKER GOODE.

A King and Queen Bride.

LITTLE PLYMOUTH, VA., December 20.—(Special.)—Miss Lila Burch and Mr. H. C. Smith were married at Ware's church, near Dogansville, Wednesday at 3 P. M. The bride entered the church with her brother, Stephen Burch, and the groom with his best man, C. C. Guthrie, Jr. They were preceded by the ushers: W. T. Kalden, G. Taylor, J. A. Grubbs, Rivers, Robert Eubank, C. M. Bland, Peter Glenn, W. Eubank, and Miss Lela Walden. Miss Linda Glenn presided at the organ. The church was tastefully decorated. The Rev. O. B. Loving performed the ceremony.

Miss Lena Revere and Mr. Clarence Lumpkin, of this place, will be married on the 24th by Rev. A. A. Jones, at the home of Mrs. O. B. Hager, No. 1507 west Cary street, Richmond. The bride-elect is a very pretty and accomplished young lady, the daughter of Mrs. M. E. Revere. The groom is a prosperous young farmer residing near Dragonsville, where they will make their future home. They will take in Washington and other northern cities on their bridal trip.

Northumberland to Be Gay.

HEATHSVILLE, VA., December 19.—(Special.)—Big preparations for a merry Christmas are being made all over this county. Entertainments at many places are in rehearsal, and every house-wife is beginning to get in her mince-meats and other necessaries for her cakes and pies. Soon, from the poultry yard the familiar gobble will be heard no more, and in many a home, the last ham of the old year is in the pot "a-boiling."

Besides the five marriages already reported in these columns for this week in Northumberland, on Thursday, Miss Elizabeth Kent became the wife of George Burgess. They were married at the home of the bride, near Lottsburg, by the Rev. Richard Edwards; and are two very popular young people of that neighborhood, where they will hereafter reside.

Justice E. W. Eichelberger and his wife are spending a week in the Monumental city. Mr. James Scott and his wife left on Friday to make their future home in Baltimore. E. Hugh Smith is expected home from William and Mary College to spend the holidays on Monday.

Mason Brent, a student at the Chesapeake Academy, returned home on Saturday for Xmas.

"77"

To "break up" a Cold., take Dr. Humphreys' "SEVENTY SEVEN" and some form of gentle exercise or work, until perspiration is induced. "77" prevents Pneumonia and cures La

GRIP

Ayer's Hair Vigor

Only 35? You look at least 60! Restore color to your gray hair. Keep young. Why not? No need growing old so fast. No excuse now that you know how Ayer's Hair Vigor always restores color.

J. C. Ayer Co., Lowell, Mass.

ADOPT HONOR SYSTEM

High Stand Taken by Roanoke College Students.

Salem Notes.

SALEM, VA., December 20.—(Special.) As the result of certain troubles at Roanoke College recently an honor system has been adopted by the student body, and it is being heartily approved of by the faculty. The purpose of the system is to eradicate the employment of any unfair means resorted to by students to win high grades.

The offences classed by the students as most reprehensible and which necessitate summary treatment are as follows:

The use of any translations, either printed or written, unless by sanction of the professors shall be considered an offence.

On examinations following are the offences prescribed:

1st. The use of any translations or notes, either printed or written.

2d. The giving or receiving of any assistance, printed, written, or verbal, or from any other source.

3d. Anything not otherwise specified, which the Board of Regents of the student body shall deem an offence.

It is the aim and purpose of the students to enforce these rules and the action and stand taken by them has been highly commended by all.

Several capitalists from Philadelphia, who came to Roanoke on their private car, were in Salem this week. They were brought here on a special car of the electric line by prominent Roanokers, and visited Roanoke College and other points of interest in this town.

Next Wednesday night, the 24th instant, at the First Presbyterian church, the marriage of Miss Alice Katherine Shipman, daughter of Mrs. A. M. Shipman, and Rev. Junius M. Battle, of Birmingham, Ala., will be solemnized. Miss Shipman is quite well known here and has a large circle of friends. Rev. and Mrs. Battle will reside in Birmingham.

Miss Mary Irvine, of Covington, Va., after a visit to the homes of Dr. and Mrs. R. W. Wiley, and Judge and Mrs. H. E. Blair, of this place, has returned to her home.

Mrs. C. E. Vawter, of Blacksburg, Va., is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Henderson on Main street.

After a stay of several weeks in Philadelphia, Pa., Mrs. J. E. Ollemong, has returned to her home here.

Mr. Ashton Tinsley, travelling salesman for a Pittsburg firm, is at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Tinsley. He is ill with typhoid-fever.

Cadet A. M. Bowman, Jr., of Kenyon College, Ohio, is in Salem to spend the holidays.

Mr. F. H. Chalmers, of this place, accompanied by his wife, left Friday for the South. They expect to spend a greater portion of the winter in St. Augustine, Fla.

Roanoke College closes to-day for the holidays and will not resume work until January 5th. Many of the students whose homes are a great distance from Salem will remain here during the holidays.

On next Tuesday afternoon the Salem High School closes for the holidays. Studies will be resumed on January 5th.

Hon. C. W. Waddy, member of the Legislature from Buena Vista, is a guest at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Munn, on Main street.

Mr. Percy Thacker, of Richmond, Va., is here visiting his parents and wife on Union street.

Colonel William Terrill, of New York, is visiting friends in Salem.

H. W. A. Hansen, a graduate of Roanoke College and now a student of Gettysburg University, is visiting friends here.

Life's Shawods and Sunshine.

(Written for the Dispatch by Hattie Davis Cooley.)

One half of our life lies in shadow,
The other half dwells in the light,
One half of our days are in sunshine,
The other half spent in dark night.
One half of our life is all pleasure,
The other half sorrow's sad song,
When our hearts are the gayest, the lightest,
We are often with misery's throng.

We are happy to-day, when beside us,
Walks our double in sorrow and grief,
Every heart knows its burden and trouble,
Every eye finds in tears a relief.
Now a smile, and before it has ended,
A heart-broken sigh heaves our breast,
Like the sunbeam that through cloudy billows,
At last sinks to sleep in the west.

We rejoice, we have conquered some victory,
To-morrow we find it is lost.
To-day the sweet flowers that cheer us,
To-morrow are nipped by the frost.
Like children, we smile through our tear-drops,
We play out life's game to the last
Each trouble, each sorrow, each pleasure,
Soon becomes but a thing of the past.

But if this life is just so divided
Then the shadows are tinged with the gold,
There is never a trouble—a trial,
But some beauty of life will unfold.
Though we walk in the valley and shadow,
Death's door opens full in the light,
And we'll find on the heavenly portals,
The shadows eternally bright.

Stuart Monument Fund.

Amount previously reported.	$2,117 40
Amounts received this week:	
James Coltart	1 00
C. E. Smith	1 00
Cash	7 00
General Eppa Hunton	10 00
Captain W. A. Townes	1 00
Colonel James T. Gray	5 00
	$2,142 40

This does not embrace any of the pledges that have been made to the association, but actual cash in hand.

THE DANGERS OF DUTY

By FRANK J. CRAIGIE, JR.

IV—Perils of River Navigators.

Navigators are renowned for their knack of getting into trouble. Probably it is no fault of theirs, for a sailor loves life as dearly as a landsman; but the ways of the deep are uncertain. No man knows where his next voyage may land him.

The sea, with its broad distances and great depths, is the place where danger piles upon danger; but the inland waters of America are not entirely free from it. Indeed, I could tell of terrible catastrophes on the Great Lakes and on the Mississippi river, while the Mississippi bears a record that the ocean itself might envy.

The James is a good river. Its channels never change over night, its floods usually spread themselves over the low grounds, and its shoals and rocks and bends are well known to every pilot who belongs in these parts. The government is placing range lights at all points of dubious characters, so that the course may show for itself. In the lower river, harbors are always to be found. Which ever way the wind, an hour's run will reach a spot where the gale can do no harm.

Yet, with all these points of safety, the James has a little scare of human life marked against it. Boilers have exploded, vessels have run together, men have fallen from masts, and others have gone overboard.

One of the most remarkable of river accidents was the blowing up of the Frank Somers, about sixteen years ago. The Somers was a tug which had done good work on the river. There are many men who remember her, and who speak of her as of an old familiar friend.

One day, just after dinner, the Somers, coming up the river off Bermuda Hundred with two or three sailing vessels in tow, blew up her boiler with a terrific report. The whole superstructure was blown off, and the hull sank immediately. Captain Edward Cavenoe was blown from the pilot house into the river. When the hawser was pulled up from the wreck, the Captain's body was found lying across it. The fireman was instantly killed, and his body was found in the wreck. The four others of the crew clung to the floating wreckage until they were saved.

The hull of the Somers was afterward raised and brought up the river. She now lies buried under the sand opposite the brewery.

Another explosion was that of the Agnes, afterward known as the Grace Meade. This happened about twenty years ago. Her commander was Captain Lawrence, at that time a resident of Richmond, but formerly from the Hudson River country, where his home overlooked the Palisades. Captain Lawrence ran a steamer named the Palisades on the James River for some time, but later traded her in as part payment for the Agnes, which he purchased from Captain Charles Nelson.

Captain Lawrence left Richmond one day for Harrison's Bar. Aboard the tug was the captain of a foreign ship, going as a passenger. Just before she reached the bar her boiler exploded and wrecked the boat. The foreign captain was scalded to death.

The hull of the Agnes was raised, and from this was built the Grace Meade, a boat well known to river men.

The Matt White, commanded by Captain Blount, of Richmond, blew up at the Rip Raps, in Hampton Roads, at four o'clock one morning some years ago. several of her crew were killed.

The men about the harbor recall two cases of men falling from topmast to the deck.

One of these was several years ago, when a young sailor, a native of Tidewater Virginia, fell from the cross-trees of a schooner lying off the C. & O. dock below Rocketts. He struck the deck and was crushed into a shapeless mass of flesh and broken bones.

The case was that of a sailor on the schooner Maria Pearson, at the Southern railway wharf, opposite Fulton. The man, who was a Swede, was working with another sailor in a "bo's'n's chair" scraping the mast. As they hung there, fifty feet above the deck, one of the ropes parted. The Swede dropped, turning over in midair and landing on his head and shoulders. His skull was fractured, his jawbone broken, and his ribs, both legs, and one arm were shattered. He was almost instantly killed. His companion, pitching forward, caught the outside rigging and slid down. His face was cut, and his hand and arms were torn and burned by the friction of the ropes.

Collisions occur now and then, but thus far little, if any, loss of life has resulted. During the past summer the Old Dominion steamship Brandon struck a two-masted schooner commanded by Captain Williams, off Graveyard Reach, about ten miles down the river. The river makes a short turn at this point, and the schooner was burning no light aft. The Brandon cleared one boat, which lay near Captain William's vessel, but hit the other. She went down in shoal water near the shore and turned on her beam ends. The wreck lay there for the rest of the summer and autumn, but the last freshet carried her down, and not a soul knows where she lies to-day.

The Wyanoke, the Old Dominion Line, from Richmond to New York, ran into the United States cruiser Columbia off the Old Point pier several years ago and sank in an incredibly short space of time. The crew and passengers escaped almost miraculously. The wreck resisted all efforts at raising it, and was finally blown up by dynamite. The confusion of the man-of-war's lights and the electric lights on the pier was responsible for this accident.

I tried to find a story of a ship burning at night, with passengers and crew jumping from the flames into the river, and with the final explosion of the boiler throwing skyward a cloud of sparks and embers. Captain Thomas Cunningham, Jr., had to go back something like thirty years to recall a case of a ship afire on the James. And it was almost a farce comedy.

The tug Wasp, belonging to Captain Charles Loeffler, laid up at Dillard's Wharf, sixty-three miles down the river, while the crew went ashore after blackberries.

The berry-hunters were hard at work when one of them, looking over the woods, saw a great cloud of smoke rising heavenward. One of them cried: "—— ——— the boat's afire!" And it was. She burned to the water's edge and sank. The cook, who was the only man aboard, had a terribly narrow escape. No one knows how narrow it was.

The hulk was raised and brought up to Richmond. It lay for a long time at the lower end of Justis's Island, and its decaying timbers have been knocked to pieces by the men who have built the Trigg ship plant over the grave of the Wasp.

If any other vessel has burned on the James since the war, no one seems to be able to remember it.

Many narrow escapes have marked the careers of the men on the city tugs.

The Frank Somers, then commanded by Captain Frank W. Cunningham, one of the most fearless men who ever turned a wheel, missed the New York steamer by less than fifteen feet in Dutch Gap one day. Only the fastest kind of work kept the two boats apart. Had they come together, the Somers would have been knocked into splinters.

On one occasion Captain Thomas Cunningham, Sr., the greatest pilot who ever sailed the James, while coming up on the tug Craighill, met the Philadelphia steamer in the Gap. The Craighill blew one whistle and kept on her course. The big boat cut across, grazed the tug boat and knocked off the small boat which hung at the Craighill's stern.

The Virginia, of the Baltimore "Bay Line," ran onto Woodson's Rocks, below Dutch Gap a few years ago, and tore her bow all to pieces. And there she staid until Captain Tom Cunningham came down with his tug and pulled her off, thereby winning a handsome gold medal.

Sailing vessels sometimes find the James a bad river to travel. During a freshet a schooner runs great risk in navigating the river, especially at night. With the channel transformed into a confusion of cross currents and whirlpools, the least false move would land the vessel's keel on the rocks of a government jetty. Then, if she smashed to pieces, none but the strongest swimmer could get to shore.

The sailing vessel moves very slowly and very quietly. In the lower reaches, where the ship can move under its own sails, she must take the chances of the channel. At night or in a fog, even with all lights burning and with the fog-bell ringing, she steals up on something in the dark, or something comes down on her. Then a great dark shape looms out of the fog, and there follows either the sickening crash of ship tearing into ship, or an escape so narrow that the pilot's hair stands on end.

Further up, after the tugboat takes her in tow, the schooner has the little steamer to stand between her and danger. Even then, a vessel, dodging the tug, cuts into the tow.

More than one man has been lost off a sailing vessel in the river. As a rule, these men come from the ports in Jersey or elsewhere along the northern coast, and are not known here. But death is just as hard to them as though the whole of Virginia rose up to mourn them.

Sometimes a tow line knocks a man overboard, or he may fall from the rigging, or even roll off a roughly laid deck cargo. The captain comes to Richmond one man short. A month later some one finds the body on the mud flats down the river.

Who can tell the stories of the death struggles of these men? No one sees them fall or hears them cry for help. But, back there, falling futher and further astern, a little black spot bobs up and down in the moonlight. Once—twice—three—and it is gone. And the wife and children far up the New England coast wait for the man who never comes.

The work which has in it more of danger than anything else along the river is that of the city's tug in breaking up ice.

The ice gorge of four winters ago gave a hard fight before it left the channel and made navigation free.

The tug Cunningham left here one Saturday for a run down the river. Captain Tom Cunningham and his crew expected to be back for Sunday dinner. They got home eleven days later.

The river was full of floating ice that Saturday, and, when the boat came up the next day her captain saw that to tie up in the harbor would mean to stay there until after the freeze. So he dropped down again. Ice must be fought from the down-stream end. Then, if the boat breaks into a floe, the pieces float down and away. Ramming an ice-pack from the upper end simply keeps your troubles piled up in front of you.

The gorge came down the river. The Cunningham ran down ahead of it, attacking at every vulnerable point. The ice pack was a tremendous thing. It filled the river from bank to bank and stood from twenty-five to forty feet high. The tugboat looked ridiculously small beside the great floating dam of ice; but, like David and Goliath, it won the fight.

Once the ice nearly caught the boat. She was attacking the pack at a point scarcely more than twenty feet from shore. The ice towered higher than the boat, and the water about its base was tossing in a hundred deep and angry whirlpools. The gorge made a turn, and its long flank crept around as though impelled by instinct, to cut off the boat's retreat. The Cunningham for once had to cut and run. A little delay would have jammed her into bits between the bank and the wall of ice. Between those two jaws the greatest battleship in the world would have been crushed like an eggshell.

The tug kept at its work, however, and at Devil's Reach she broke the gorge. For hours the river was a mass of raging waters. In an hour the river below the gorge rose five feet, and fragments of ice were scattered all over the surface.

The same law which keeps two thirds of an iceberg under water holds good with an ice gorge, which, when floating free of the river-bottom, is a berg pure and simple. This makes another danger. It nearly caught one tug in a former gorge.

The boat was ramming the floe. She backed down stream for a running start, then came up at full tilt. She struck the pack squarely. A great piece split off the face of the icewall. Instead of toppling over on the boat, the base of the berg rolled up from the river bottom and threw the boat over with her rail awash. She came as near turning turtle as a boat can without actually doing it. Then the berg rolled around, with its one third above the water and floated down the stream.

Ice fighting is always dangerous. I have heard Hudson river captains tell of steamers "stove in" and battered nearly to pieces by it, and of men who were caught below decks and killed when the ice crashed through the vessel's sides. And ice is ice. What has happened there, while it cannot happen here under normal conditions, might easily come to pass with a river choked up by the fragments of an ice gorge. At such times a vessel is safer in the Roads than in the river.

The Cunningham is ready for the ice again. The committee, alive to the interests which the little vessel so nobly safeguards, had her built with a nose that could break ice—and break ice she will as long as her sturdy captain can hold her together.

The men who live on the river seldom think of its dangers. One of the best known of the river captains says:

"I can sleep on my boat as peacefully as a child in a cradle; but, put me on a railroad train and I can't draw an easy breath until I've finished the trip and begin to climb off the platform."

Cuban to Visit Here.

Cadet-Sergeant John S. Harwood, Jr. has arrived in the city, from the Locust Dale Academy, and is the guest of his parents, Colonel John S. Harwood and wife, on monument avenue.

Cadet Harwood will have as his guest during the holidays Cadet Montalvo, son of John Montalvo, of Cuba.

THE VALUE OF CHARCOAL.

Few People Know How Useful it is in Preserving Health and Beauty.

Nearly everybody knows that charcoal is the safest and most efficient disinfectant and purifier in nature, but few realize its value when taken into the human system for the same cleansing purpose.

Charcoal is a remedy that the more you take of it the better; it is not a drug at all, but simply absorbs the gases and impurities always present in the stomach and intestines and carries them out of the system.

Charcoal sweetens the breath after smoking, drinking, or after eating onions and other odorous vegetables.

Charcoal effectually clears and improves the complexion, it whitens the teeth and further acts as a natural and eminently safe cathartic.

It absorbs the injurious gases which collect in the stomach and bowels; it disinfects the mouth and throat from the poison of catarrh.

All druggists sell charcoal in one form or another, but probably the best charcoal and the most for the money is in Stuart's Absorbent Lozenges; they are composed of the finest powdered Willow charcoal, and other harmless antiseptics in tablet form, or rather in the form of large, pleasant tasting lozenges, the charcoal being mixed with honey.

The daily use of these lozenges will soon tell in a much improved condition of the general health, better complexion, sweeter breath and purer blood, and the beauty of it is, that no possible harm can result from their continued use, but on the contrary, great benefit.

A Buffalo physician, in speaking of the benefits of charcoal, says: "I advise Stuart's Absorbent Lozenges to all patients suffering from gas in stomach and bowels, and to clear the complexion and purify the breath, mouth and throat; I also believe the liver is greatly benefited by the daily use of them; they cost but twenty-five cents a box at drug stores, and although in some sense a patent preparation, yet I believe I get more and better charcoal in Stuart's Absorbent Lozenges than in any of the ordinary charcoal tablets."

GOLD SEAL

America's Best

CHAMPAGNE

"SPECIAL DRY." "BRUT."

"GOLD SEAL" is made by the French process from the choicest grapes grown in our own vineyards, excels any other American wine and equals any imported.

No Christmas dinner is complete without it.

"GOLD SEAL" may be placed on the table of the most fastidious connoisseur without fear of criticism or comparison with any imported champagne.

Why pay twice as much for foreign labels?

ORDER A CASE FOR CHRISTMAS.

"GOLD SEAL" is sold everywhere and served at all leading clubs and cafes.

URBANA WINE CO., URBANA, N. Y., SOLE MAKER.

THE STUDENTS IN SUFFOLK.

They Entertained Friday—Two Coming Weddings—Personals.

SUFFOLK, VA., December 20.—(Special.)—The students of Suffolk College gave their ante-Christmas musical Friday night, when a varied and interesting programme of vocal and instrumental music and literary selections was rendered in an admirable manner.

Mr. Linwood Holland, of Suffolk, a student in the dental department of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, arrived here last Sunday, having been attacked with appendicitis. Dr. John E. Phillips treated him until Thursday, when Dr. Lomax Gwathmey, of Norfolk, was called in to consult with Dr. Phillips. It was decided to remove the young man to Dr. Gwathmey's sanitarium, in Norfolk, for an operation, which was successfully performed yesterday.

Two high-toned marriage are to take place here on Tuesday, December 30th. At 12:30 o'clock, at the Christian church, Miss Jennie Pretlow Holland, eldest daughter of Mrs. Susie Holland, will become the bride of Mr. Harry Lipscomb Trotman, of Churchland, Norfolk county. At 6 o'clock P. M., at St. Paul's Episcopal church, Miss Martha Josephine Causey, youngest daughter of Mrs. Martha J. Causey, will be united in marriage to Mr. Thomas Spindle Miller, of Christiansburg, Va.

Mrs. G. Wilbur Shipley and children are visiting relatives in Washington, D. C. Rev. Mr. Shipley will leave here next Monday to join them and spend the holidays in that city and vicinity.

A foot-ball game will be played here on Christmas-Day between a Norfolk team and the "Dixies," of Suffolk.

Dr. John E. Phillips, of Suffolk, was elected vice-president of the Seaboard Medical Association of Virginia and North Carolina, at its annual meeting held in Wilson, N. C., this week.

Rev. Beverly D. Tucker, D. D., of Norfolk, has accepted an invitation to deliver the annual address before Tom Smith Camp, Confederate Veterans, on General Lee's birthday.

WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU.

Few People Realize the Importance of Good Digestion Until It is Lost.

Many people suffer from dyspepsia and do not know it. They feel mean, out of sorts, peevish, do not sleep well, do not have a good keen appetite, do not have the inclination and energy for physical or mental work they once had, but at the same time do not feel any particular pain or distress in the stomach. Yet all this is the result of poor digestion, an insidious form of Dyspepsia which can only be cured by a remedy specially intended to cure it and make the digestive organs act naturally and properly digest the food eaten. Bitters, after dinner pills and nerve tonics will never help the trouble; they don't reach it. The new medical discovery does. It is called Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets, and is a specific for dyspepsia and indigestion. It cures because it thoroughly digests all wholesome food taken into the stomach, whether the stomach is in good working order or not.

Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets, by digesting the food, instead of making the worn out stomach do all the work, gives it a much needed rest and a cure of dyspepsia is the natural result.

When you are nervous, run down, and sleepless, don't make the common mistake of supposing your nervous system needs treatment and fill your stomach with powerful nerve tonics which make you feel good for a little while only to fall back farther than ever.

Your nerves are all right, but they are starved, they want food.

Nourish them with wholesome, every-day food, and plenty of it, well digested and you can laugh at nerve tonics and medicine.

But the nerves will not be nourished from a weak, abused stomach, but when the digestion has been made perfect by the use of this remedy all nervous symptoms disappear.

Who ever heard of a man or woman blessed with a vigorous digestion and good appetite being troubled with their nerves?

Good digestion means a strong nervous system, abundance of energy, and capacity to enjoy the good things of life.

Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets will certainly set your stomach and digestive organs right; they can't help but do it, because they nourish the body by digesting the food eaten, and rest the stomach.

You get nourishment and rest at one and the same time, and that is all the worn out dyspeptic needs to build him up and give new life to every organ and added zest to every pleasure.

Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets are a godsend to the army of men and women with weak stomachs, weak nerves, and justly merits the claim of being one of the most worthy medical discoveries of the time.