

# The Weekly Comet

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Official Journal of the Parish of East Baton Rouge. Also of the Grasse Tete and Baton Rouge, and of the Baton Rouge and Clinton Plank Road Companies.

Sunday Morning, Dec. 11, 1853.

**EXECUTIVE SESSIONS.**—"By your leave gentlemen!—By your leave!! make way for the President!!" "The Board then went into secret Session." This meets our eye in the last proceedings of the City Council. As it affords us infinite pleasure to chronicle anything that gives evidence of the "growing" propensities of Red Stick, we cannot let the fact pass by, that the Board went into executive session, without making some mention of it. From an ordinance which precedes the "secret session," we would infer that some of the Board have met with incivilities, at the hand of Menagerie managers; it must either be so, or some of our own citizens are going into the caravan business themselves. Look at the following ordinance as it stands on the record.

Be it ordained by the Mayor and Board of Selectmen, that each and every proprietor of a Menagerie arriving in this town by water shall pay for the first exhibition forty dollars, and for every subsequent exhibition twenty dollars and cost of license, and for every Menagerie arriving by land twenty dollars for the first, and ten dollars for each subsequent exhibition with two dollars cost of license, to take effect from and after its passage.

We cannot stop now to argue the "moral" effect of Menageries. We would like however that some one would furnish us some of the reasons, why every species of entertainment, is driven from the town, by unheard of prohibitory taxes? Is it following the precedent of other great places? By no means.

It cuts us off from that kind of amusement for the million, which is indispensable to its healthy existence.

The Uniform for Independence Fire Company No. 2, is nearly completed.

Will the company turn out when equipped, that the citizens generally may see what it numbers?

Mr. Bourcicault, the dramatist has created quite a sensation in the literary circles of New York. Burton purchased of him (so it is said) the manuscript copy of a new comedy entitled *Foxhunter of the modern Don Quixotte*. Some of the New York critics pronounce it a barefaced plagiarism, from a French play called *Sullivan*.

Will not this turn out to be another contest between France, and Star Spangled bannerdom, similar to the race at the Hippodrome? We think so. It is not probable that a writer of Bourcicault's genius—the author of so many popular pieces, should be guilty of such a petty larceny. It is undoubtedly, a stratagem "to fill the house."

The Commercial Bulletin of the 9th instant, reports a terrific gale on Lake Pontchartrain, Thursday last. The Steamer *Lancaster* was driven ashore and three lives reported to be lost. The schooners *Susannah* and *Louisiana* were sunk about half a mile from the new canal, and the barge *Henry Clay* received considerable damage. The amount of property lost by the gale, is not yet ascertained.

The oyster trade is extensively carried on at Boston. Messrs. Atwood have nine vessels exclusively employed in the business, five of which are clipper built schooners, freighting oysters from the South. They have seventy-five acres of flats, near what is called White Island, on the Mystic river, where the fresh oysters of the South are transplanted, to grow and fatten in water much softer than their native element, and where they keep a supply in the summer months, and for the winter stock.

## The Interpreter.

This is the title of a neat little sheet published in New Orleans, the first number of which lies before us. Sherman and Wharton, 98 Camp street are the publishers. We like the motto of the paper, "It is the duty of a citizen, Native or Naturalized, to think and act independently in all matters; and to defend the State from ecclesiastical encroachment by any Church or sect whatever."

A newspaper published avowedly to advocate any particular cause, must necessarily fall into prejudices, and become so interwoven with the passions of men, as to be narrow-minded and bigoted in its views. Papers published to advocate any particular cause, must lose sight of all others, and hence cannot be regarded as standards of morality and virtue. Hence the "Temperance Advocate" becomes intemperate in its views—the "Christian Advocate" an one-sided, if not bigoted sectarian exponent of narrow-minded views, and the professedly Democratic organ, gets to be an agrarian leveler, who would break up the very foundation upon which society stands. These are the errors and extremes into which the mind of man inevitably falls, when it becomes enlisted in any particular cause. It is for this reason, that exclusively sectarian journals and party papers, should be depreciated in a liberal and enlightened community.

A Catholic paper, calls forth a Protestant. And a whig four by six journal, published in a village of a half dozen inhabitants, must have on the other side of the street, a Democratic establishment to deny every proposition advanced in its columns.

Does a liberal and impartial observer go to either to ascertain the truth? By no means. For the votaries of each, know that the other "lies" without intermission. The different orders of religion that base their precepts on the doctrines of Christ, have grown out of the prejudices of man, and not the variance of reason; for there is no disagreement with regard to fact.

The "Interpreter" seems to us, to be impetively demanded of the times, and we hope that it will be calmly conducted, under the broad principles of reason and common sense.

An effort is being made by the Catholic Clergy in America, to work up a rupture, on the subject of education. They are instigated to this by trans-Atlantic influence, and the movement is a simultaneous one all over the Union. An effort is being made in our midst, to divide the public school fund, that the Catholic Church may have what she calls her portion. To any such disorganizing, anti-republican movement, it is the imperative duty of all sects, to unite and offer a solemn protest.

We must confess, that very little in these latter days surprises us; but we must candidly confess, we cannot discover where the head, and front of this party, borrows the audacity to make such a proposition—a proposition that is a direct insult to the intelligence of the nineteenth century—one that can never be entertained by a true republican, who understands the aim and object of the founders of this government. A secret circular found its way into the last legislature that had on its face the audacity of this proposition. Plainly asking a division of the public school fund.

The Interpreter is in possession of a copy of the same, and other evidence of the great convulsion that this State, must be thrown into by a proposition, that lays the axe at the very foundation of Republican Government. We wish the "Interpreter" success.

**THE BROADWAY RAILROAD.**—Judge Duer, in the Supreme Court at New York, decided on the 25th that the injunction prohibiting the laying of a railroad in Broadway should be perpetual.

**The State, vs. John, a slave belonging to J. W. Musselman.**—The trial of this case commenced yesterday morning at the Court House. P. A. Walker and F. B. Sans, Esqrs., presiding. "John" is charged with shooting Mr. Joseph Gates, with intent to kill.

We listened to the evidence on the part of the prosecution, and could gather nothing to convict the prisoner of the offence. Mr. Gates is dangerously wounded in the face, but the identity of the person firing at him, has not yet been established, as the act was committed at night, on the highway.

**THE FASTEST TIME YET.**—The beautiful steamer Southern Belle came up to our landing on Sunday, at about a quarter after one o'clock P. M., under a perfect cloud of smoke, having made the run from New Orleans in the extraordinary time of twenty hours and three minutes, during one hour of which, she was tied up to the bank near Morganza, repairing her cam rod frame. Her running time was but 19 hours and 3 minutes, not deducting time lost in wooding. This beats any time ever yet made on the river. Her run to Baton Rouge, beats the brag run of the Eclipse to the same place, 40 minutes.

We have been furnished with the following more minute account of this extraordinary performance, which we place on record for future reference:

Time of the Southern Belle to Red Church 1h. 40m.; to Bonnet Carre, 2h. 30m.; to Donaldsonville, 5h. 10.; to Baton Rouge, 8h. 50m.; to Bayou Sara, 11h. 15m.; to Natchez, 20h. 3m.

The Belle broke her cam frame half a mile below Morganza, having been 11 hours and 55 minutes out and lost one hour to repair; took on 50 cords of wood at Red River; had considerable freight; stopped the engines several times on account of smoke, and was running against a rise in the river. She carried steam under the new law.—*Vicksburg Whig.*

The Smithsonian Lectures which have been so attractive to citizens and sojourners in Washington in former seasons, promise to be equally interesting and instructive the coming winter. The services of the following distinguished gentlemen have already been secured:

Benjamin Hallowel, Esq., of Alexandria, Va., who will deliver a course of popular lectures on Astronomy. Dr. J. Lawrence Smith, of the University of Virginia, a course of twelve or more lectures on Chemistry. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who will repeat his course of lectures on poetry.—Professor Charles W. Hackley, who will give a history of learned institutions throughout the world. The following gentlemen have also been invited to lecture before the institution: Wm. G. Dix, of Cambridge, Massachusetts; Henry Barnard, L. L. D., Superintendent of common schools, Connecticut; Geo. Hilliard, Esq., the popular lecturer of New England; W. Gilmore Simms, the author of *Charleston, S. C.*; Professor McGuffie, of the University of Virginia.

**AUGUSTE BELMONTE VS COURT ETIQUETTE.**—According to advices just received by foreign Ministers resident here, our Charge to Holland had much difficulty in obtaining the usual reception, costumed like a plain American citizen, according to the orders or advice embraced in the circular letter of Secretary Marcy, with which the country are familiar.

Perseverance conquered all difficulties, we understand; though, it is said, not until after he intimated his disposition to return unless so received. It is the duty of Congress, at the coming session, to enact, that our ministers abroad shall rigorously represent the spirit of our institutions and government in their appearance under the eyes of the public, under all occasions. No Government in the world would object in case such was imperative American law.—*Washington Star.*

A breach of promise case was recently tried at Hamilton, Canada, in which a gentleman was the plaintiff, and not the lady, as is generally the case. The parties lived in Saltfleet, and are both young, the gentleman being 25 and the lady 24 years of age. According to the evidence, the parties had been courting for four years, and the defendant was willing to marry the plaintiff, but he wished her to "wait a little longer;" she being tired of waiting, married another—hence the action for damages. The Judge, after an absence of an hour and a half, returned a verdict for defendant.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Buffalo has addressed a letter to the congregation of the Church of St. Louis, in that city, threatening to excommunicate them if they do not conform to the decision of the Papal Nuncio, and deliver their church property into his hands.

Our citizens were thrown in great consternation on Saturday by the intelligence that our respected and venerable fellow-citizen, Col. WALTER TURNBULL, had been killed. The particulars of this melancholy affair have been announced in the Sunday papers, and may be intelligibly ascertained from the following affidavit of Mr. ANDREW MILLER, taken before Recorder WINTER:

"Andrew Miller, sworn, stated—That on this evening the 3d December, 1853, between the hours of one and two o'clock, on Tchoupitoulas street, near St. Mary's Market, in this District, deponent heard the report of a pistol, near an omnibus, then passing by said market; said deponent saw the prisoner, James Patton, who was in the said omnibus at the said time and place, unprovokedly and maliciously assault and fire a pistol three times at Col. Walter Turnbull, who was standing near said omnibus; three shots taking effect in the breast of said Turnbull, and from the said wounds Turnbull has since died, as deponent verily believes and charges."

Col. TURNBULL was one of our most estimable citizens. He had held several offices of trust and responsibility, and always discharged his duties most acceptably. He was a gentleman of the old school; courteous and affable in his deportment, and universally esteemed as an honorable, amiable, kind-hearted gentleman.—*Bulletin 5th inst.*

"A petition to the Secretary of War to cause the swamp lying adjacent to Baton Rouge, and belonging to the U. S., to be drained is in circulation and is receiving the signatures of the inhabitants of that place generally."

The foregoing is from the Delta, as it is rather new to us, we give place to it, in order that the people at large, may know what is going on in our midst, unawares to them.

**John Wolf's Furniture warehouses on Church St.**—At the landing yesterday morning we noticed a very large and varied assortment of new furniture, which is for Wolf's establishment on Church street. Wolf has a number of hands now at work manufacturing, and repairing, and is gradually enlarging his concern, so as to meet the increased demands upon him. Wolf is a number-one workman himself, and will give general satisfaction. His prices are such as to suit the times.

In our article yesterday, in reference to U. S. Senator, we speak of the coming legislature as having to elect that important public servant. The election does not come off at the first session—it is the second session of the same body in January 1855 that elects that officer.

The Democrats of Caddo, held a meeting on the 3rd inst., to nominate a candidate for the Legislature to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Wm. R. Douglass, Esq.

There was a rumor in New Orleans on Thursday, that Louis Napoleon has been assassinated in Paris. How it gets there the papers do not say.

Will Col. Gaisford please inform us, what his contemporaries mean when they talk of the "Sea of War?"

**ARRIVALS AT THE HARNEY HOUSE.**  
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.  
7th, 8th, 9th and 10th.—Thos. J. Williamson; J. A. Dougherty, N. O.; H. Mansur, N. O.; V. B. Walker, Manchac; Col. W. J. A. Roberts, Cr. W. James, Col. D. Mitchell, J. J. Gutierrez, J. Hebert, N. O.; F. J. Papineau, Iberville; J. H. Forster, Wm. Foster, Wm. Holmes, John Caer, England; E. Penny, Wetherfield, Ill.; W. C. Dill, Copenhagen, La.; L. Dohyans, Jefferson, Mo.; Saml. W. Hill, J. S. Jones, N. O.; W. R. Hin Cincinnati; H. Godfrey, St. Louis; M. Wm. Shreveport; Wm. Egan, B. Sara; J. Uppe, Bonville; T. Thayer, Algiers, La.; Lafayette Idwell, W. B. R.; J. W. Mason and family, Sigsfield; S. D. Dobbins, N. O.; A. D. Tyler, St. Louis; N. F. Bishop, Marietta; G. Byles, Frankfort, Pickering, Philadelphia; C. Sum, New York; Sprignt, N. Y.; W. D. Kelly, Tennessee; B. Vall, Plains; R. E. Stuart, Baton Rouge; B. Bally, West Feliciana; J. J. Camaux, F. Esq, N. O.; E. C. Bell, Texas; B. G. Allen, Sacramento City, Cal.; W. C. Graves, Georgetown, Ky.; J. Grigby, Winchester, Ky.

## Generally—Railroads.

So much is being said about railroads and other enterprises—the spirit of progress—the march of improvement, and other kindred subjects, that it devolves upon us to take a hand in the controversy. It is a solemn duty, involving the whole interest of the undivided South-west, and it should be treated of, without levity. The question is, "what would be the effect of a railroad from Pompeii to Port Hudson?" How would the interest of the planters be effected? Would not the price of land enhance? And would not Port Hudson become an immense commercial depot for the merchandise of all nations? These are some of the questions that should be calmly considered; and as we have to refer to "De Bow's Commercial statistics," "Hunt's Merchant's," and the "Railroad Magazine;" we must be pardoned for occupying more than the allotted space for a "Comet leader." The text is "The general effects of railroads generally." In discussing this subject, we cannot do better than take the New Orleans and Jackson, and Great Northern; as a great, if not a very good example of "What railroads will do." The subject of a great railroad to some undefined point in the Northwest, was a "happy idea"—a subject of vast magnitude—a subject that called all the great men in the State—and a few others besides—into Convention—a Convention was held, we don't recollect when (see De Bow) and that Convention decided (see record page 76) that the said railroad "shall be built" along the coast.—The same Convention appointed—or rather elected a board of Directors, who scarcely organized into the Great northern company before they changed the location of the route, in order to bring into market, lands that had been previously bought for a similar speculation. The result is that the Great Northern Railroad runs out into the swamps of South Eastern Louisiana, where it will remain a monument.

There could be no objection to this, if the State were not made the principal partner, and the people the sufferers; and all this to build up the overgrown estates of foreign capitalists, and New Orleans money brokers. Suppose for a moment the Great Northern road ever gets as far as the Mississippi line, it can never go farther, until a more honest set of people inhabit that region than the present race. The people there will never suffer a direct tax for a road, and as to selling "their bonds" it would be a better speculation to get up all her '37 shiplasters and the 'Union,' and Brandon notes, and take them into market.

Talk of railroads in Louisiana, with her great monopolizing sugar estates; and the lands that are fit for cultivation, all in the hands of parties, who would rather see it a wilderness as it is, than occupied by an industrious population; the idea is simply ridiculous. Some few roads may be drenched out of the Great Commercial Emporium, but they will never go much farther than the Pontchartrain, the Mexican Gulf, the Carrolton, and the Nashville establishments. When it is discovered that any other place in the State, than New Orleans will come to a dead pause, and blow off steam.

Our neighbor in Lafayette street has lately furnished the world with two or three interesting articles on the "Coast Railroad." In yesterday's paper he has a column entitled "The Baton Rouge and New Orleans Railroad and its effects upon the Planters on the Coast." This is another "anticipatory." It would be better to speak of that enterprise in the future tense, and then the speculations could be infinite with regard to its effects upon the Planters.

The citizens of Baton Rouge offered to take \$100,000 in the stock of such a company, and the Coast Parishes would have subscribed liberally—the road could and would have been built without any aid from the State; but now it is futile to talk of any such enterprise, and we hope our friend in Lafayette street will take up the more feasible plan of a railroad from Pompeii to Port Hudson which may be the commencement if not the end of the Pacific enterprise