The Sentinel.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24.

Just as the country had taken a long breath over the announcement of the completion of Bancroft's history, comes the intelligence that Bryant and Gay are about beginning a history of the United States, covering precisely the same period detailed by Bancroft. It is enough to give one a literary ague to think of Bryant chained to the gang plank of statistics covering the periods of the nation's birth, growth and infancy. When completed it is a book which conscientious Americans will probably buy, but no one will ever read. Mr. Bryant's age is not one at which a man would be apt to approach such a herculean task with spirit. Mr. Sidney Howard Gay, is a journalist of the first rank, and whatever he takes in hand will be well done. There are works, however, which would be read with more satisfaction than a popular history of the United States.

The Chicago newspapers have a new victim to "interview." The victim is a woman—a young woman—in official station, and of course, hedged in by romance. She has just been appointed to the pension agency in that city—an office bringing the incumbent $2000 a year, and as the political grabbers are all outraged, the city enjoys the novelty. The young lady is the daughter of the late General Swett, who filled the place of pension agent for some years, and in whose office the daughter learned the business from the beginning, serving as deputy after he left it, and until he went on to Washington just before her death. She is not very triumphant over the victory, the newspapers say, but means to introduce some very marked improvements so soon as she gets fairly to work. The office is just the same as that held by Gen. W. H. Terrell, in this city.

Lives of Lincoln have been so abundant and intolerable since his death, and even before, that the announcement of a new attempt would under ordinary circumstances, be received with a very languid interest. The fact, however, that, of all the histories of his life, not one has given satisfaction, is a promise that an attempt by competent hands would be welcomed by the nation. It is safe to predict that Colonel John Hay and John G. Nicolay, who were associated with the president, not one as a law student, and both as secretaries, can, if they make the attempt, present a biography which would do the subject complete justice. Colonel Hay was in Lincoln & Henrdon's law office in Springfield, Illinois, and afterwards became Mr. Lincoln to Washington as his private secretary. Mr. Nicolay was in a similar position and these two men are probably better fitted to make an abstract of the life and character of the great president than any one that could be named. Both are men of cultivation, Col. Hay being preeminently a man of letters, and above all things gifted to retouch the simple grandeur of Lincoln's life.

New York finds cause for uneasiness in several directions, lest the vast volume of her trade be diverted by streams which turn aside to other points, reducing if not drying up the fountain of wealth. At one moment she hears a jealousy of Boston, by boasting that the African trade, heretofore given to Massachusetts, is coming to New York. But the Bulletin does not affect to whip the devil round the stump, but states the fact in plain terms, that the provision trade is running away to Chicago, Cincinnati and all the large seaboard cities, north and south. The fact admitted, the Bulletin next seeks the cause, and reads the New Yorkers a pretty sound lecture on their short-sighted policies that are working greater injury than any advantages. The Bulletin finds that the western chaps have quietly got an arrangement for making their through shipments from Chicago to Liverpool and other European ports at a saving of a quarter of a cent per pound for freight on the same roads that carry produce to New York. Also, the packers like to sell to shippers at home and get their money on the nail without ten or twelve days' delay. Then there are some very stupid abuses pointed out in the inspection system of New York that subject the western packers to disagreeable losses. The Bulletin holds the produce exchange responsible for all these annoyances which attend the trade with that city, and takes it to task for reform. It is questionable if even this bold admonition has not come too late. Animals never forget a bad trick once learned. So also the new methods of business, the innovations upon old established routines are final. Revolutions never go back. And it will not be many years before the interior cities of America will trade with Europe, indifferent to Manhattan and Peter Stuyvesant.

It is enough to make an honest man despair of republican government, or rather its administration, to contemplate its abuses. The Chicago Tribune puts the office holding abuse in the light of a pension system, a very appropriate conceit. The war veterans form but a part of the army of pensioners on the public fund. Mr. Dawes in his blast on economy attacks the system of collecting revenue, and gives the figures. Take out eight of the leading ports at which the total revenue collected reaches $175,395,222, for which amount the salaries take 4.82 per cent., and there are left 128 ports, at all of which the aggregate receipts are but $9,162,793, and the cost of collecting that sum last year was $1,664,873, or very near to 20 per cent. of the whole sum. But sifting a little closer, and there are found to be thirty-two ports in the United States where there is not a dollar of revenue collected. Yet these ports are manned with pensioners to the number of 132 persons kept under pay for doing no service whatever. The annual cost of these useless dependents is over $75,000. In fourteen other ports named there are ninety officers, who together collected $1,196, or a little over twenty-two dollars apiece, for which service they were paid out of funds collected elsewhere, $72,546, or an average of $806 each. Going on to classify, there are seventeen other ports presided over by 134 United States dignitaries, who manage to collect $2110 each, at a cost of $95,890, thus drawing a pension of over $722 each for services not named in their instructions. In eight ports fifty-eight officers collected $51,583, and received for the service, $55,763. In four ports the amount of $102,446 was collected at a cost of $136,413. Summing the five groups last named, and it gives 515 able bodied pensioners, all, no doubt, good curbstone politicians, who manage to scrape up for the government $183,890, but draw out in salaries $435,271, thus costing the people $251,472 to support a set of barnacles who would die if they had to work for a living instead of sponging off from somebody else. Twelve men in Virginia are kept under pay as revenue collectors, who never collect a dollar. In Florida, two custom houses support seventeen persons for the annual service of collecting fifty two dollars. Why not abolish these drains upon the public treasury? Why not reduce the force of idle pensioners? The answer is, not that they are serviceable to the government, but they are necessary to the "great party," to carry elections. That is the service for which they are paid.

AN URN FOR THE GOOD DEACON.

Tributes like this to true goodness, from the New York Sun, revive desponding hope in human nature:

The Courier-Journal takes up Canon Kingsley's proposal to add an American to the collection of buried greatness in Westminster Abbey, and nominates Murat Halstead, on the ground that he is handsome, saying, "Deacon Richard Smith is too short." This is frivolous, and unworthy the leader of southwestern journalism. Not that we dispute the good looks of Murat Halstead. In the fullness and power of his noble physical proportions, he is one of the finest specimens of a man of letters. But personal beauty cannot be a qualification for burial in Westminster Abbey, since one dead man is no handsomer than another; and when they are reduced to ashes by the new process of cremation, the alkaline remainder of Halstead will be about the same, both in height and appearance, as the alkaline remainder of Deacon Richard Smith; and in that ultimate mass of atoms, one will be just as tall and just as short as the other, and straight legs and bandy legs will stand on a par. All the personal magnificence which the Courier-Journal now glorifies will then have disappeared in mere smoke and gas, blown about, and yielding, it may be, a new and gorgeous means of sport to those

"gay creatures of the element
That in the colors of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted clouds."

But that which cannot be blown away, and which will not merely live in memory as an individual thing, but will be diffused in ever extending influence, is true goodness; and in this unequalled gift, Deacon Richard Smith outshines all competitors, and leaves Halstead nowhere in the comparison. For this reason we appeal to the Courier-Journal to revise its judgment, on the absurd test of shortness, and to advocate for the vacant urn in Westminster Abbey the unique good candidate we have put up. We appeal also, above all, to Murat Halstead himself to decline this invidious compliment from Louisville, and to join with all his own magnanimous heart, in paying honor to his illustrious neighbor, his friend of old, his associate in many things, especially in selecting men to be appointed by President Grant five years ago, in award, to Deacon Richard Smith of Cincinnati, for the reason simple yet morally beautiful, that he is a truly good man.

In one of the last speeches made by Senator Sumner a few days before his death, he made use of these words, which may be taken as the national sentiment:

"Now, sir, allow me to say that I have three earnest desires in connection with our coming anniversary. First, to secure a proper commemoration of the great day, truly worthy of this republic, and characteristic, so that republican institutions shall thereby gain; secondly, to give the national character, which must suffer if the present scheme is pursued; and, thirdly, to save the national treasury."

If any man ever gained the right to counsel this nation on a point involving its good management or dignity, Charles Sumner was the man, and his dying words should be taken as a sacred charge by his fellow legislators.

The New York Sun puts a somewhat worn out jeadgment rather tersely. A cotemporary had insinuated that the Sun was never so happy as when it found a weak spot in the armor of the administration. To which the Sun responds with neatness:

This is a disturbing to happiness altogether too common a source. We take no pleasure in the misfortune and disgrace of our country. What we rejoice at is when we can find in the administration any strong spot, anything worthy of commendation; but alas! such discoveries are like angels' visits, few and far between.

FOREIGN.

ENGLAND.

RETURN OF THE VETERANS.

LONDON, March 23.—Ten thousand people witnessed the landing of the Highlanders, at Portsmouth, to-day. It is understood that the queen has ordered an inspection in Hyde Park, on Friday, of all the troops of the expedition which have reached home.

SPAIN.

REWARD FOR BUTCHER BURNEL—THE NEW CUBAN RULER.

MADRID, March 23.—The government contemplates promotion of General Burnel to the rank of field-marshal, for eminent services rendered in Cuba. The commission of Don Jose Concha, who has been appointed to succeed Captain-General Jovelar is understood to embrace the government of Porto Rico as well as Cuba.

FRANCE.

A RESOLUTION DEMANDED—THE CURE OF SANTA CRUZ KICKED OUT.

PARIS, March 23.—In the assembly to-day a protest was presented demanding the dissolution of the chamber. The protest is signed by M. Gambetta, Ledon, Rotlin, Challemel, Lacour, Peyret and Barodit.

BAYONNE, March 23.—French authorities conducted the cure of Santa Cruz to the frontier.

ITALY.

THE SUNNY ITALIANS CELEBRATE—A NEW BATCH OF CARDINALS TO BE TURNED OUT.

ROME, March 23.—To-day being the 25th anniversary of the accession of Victor Emanuel to the throne of Sardinia, the people of the country are observing it as a holiday.

The pope has intimated that Archbishop Manning and other archbishops will be created cardinals at the next consistory.

The king to-day received some three thousand persons from all parts of the kingdom, who came to congratulate him on the 25th anniversary of his accession. Signor Visconti Vendita, the minister of foreign affairs, presented to his majesty an address from the American and English residents.

NO USE TRYING.

A TAME LOT OF DEMOCRATS.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., March 23.—The democratic state convention met to-day, and resolved to make no nominations for state offices. It appointed a state committee and adjourned.

DEVASTATION.

THE CITY IN PERIL.

A WHIRLWIND OF FLAME.

FURIOUS FLAMES FEED ON FAST-FALLING FABRICS—MERCANTILE ROW, SHEET'S HOTEL, AND THE MARTINDALE BLOCK THE PREY—THE FIRST TWO RUINED AND THE LAST DAMAGED BADLY—THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS SWEPT AWAY IN AN HOUR—SCENES AND INCIDENTS—THE ORIGIN—INSURANCE AND LOSS.

Indianapolis was startled as it never has been before, last night by a fire, which at one time threatened to sweep through entire squares. About seven o'clock in the evening, Mr. John R. Firmin, who was coming down Pennsyvania street, near Vajen's block, saw the reflection of the flames on the buildings opposite, and then discovered them, starting from Vagen's building in the third story, and about in the centre. He ran with utmost speed to engine-house No. 5, on Massachusetts avenue and gave the alarm. Within the space of a lightning's flash the fire had spread to the fourth story and its light could be seen for squares around. A strong westerly wind was blowing at the time, and showers of sparks were spread easterly beyond Delaware street falling on hundreds of buildings beyond. Hardly ten minutes passed before the block was a mass of flame. From every window and door long tongues of flame darted out. The light was brighter than that of day. Then followed great waves of flame, one urging on another, and furiously rushing into every part of the building, enshrouded it till was nothing but the outlines of the building could be seen. Above it, rolled dense volumes of smoke, hiding all sight of the sky, and reaching further and further up as the frame and wood-work fed the ravenous appetite of the monster fire. Probably ten minutes elapsed from the first sign of fire until the alarm bell sounded (which was not a general one), though it was but a few seconds before No. 5 arrived and soon after other companies followed. Before this the light from the burning buildings and their reflection on the sky aroused the whole city. From every quarter, rushed crowds of people. Those preparing to attend church, those at supper or just arising from the table, as though seized with a common impulse, made their way towards the terrible scene. Market street, the Circle, Ohio between Meridian and Delaware, were each and all black with the thousands who crowded and jostled and pushed in their eagerness and excitement to get as near as possible. Though the

DANGER OF APPROACHING

the burning building on Pennsylvania street was great, it was not great enough to prevent some from rushing in where angels or any one else feared to tread. Soon the flame which had been pouring upward shot out from every part of the building and the heat became intense even at a great distance. The excitement increased every moment. No earthly power seemed possible to check the fire, it gathered force every second, creating a current of air that fanned the flames with fearful intensity. The scene at this point was fairly sublime. The arches and ornamental iron work, the cornices, and every inch of the facade stood out in splendor. The vast throngs of spectators did not watch the flames in silence. "That's going to spread across the street." "They can't save Louis Lang's. In another minute that will be on fire." "Good God the whole square will burn." "The Journal office will suffer yet." Lucky the wind changed. "Why don't they put more water on the other buildings" said one. "Look out for the hose reel" cried others as it whirled along rapidly, scattering the crowd like chaff before the wind. These and other cries and shouts and running to and fro of half distracted people made a perfect pandemonium. On fences, in houses, on house tops clung and clustered men and boys, women and children. About half an hour after the fire was fairly under way, the roof and underwalls began to tremble then to totter and finally fell with a thundering crashing sound. Then as if feeling how strong they were the flames renewed their fury. Pieces of burning wood were carried high into the air, and fell two or more squares away. Millions of sparks floated with the thick smoke lighting it until it was as a cloud and a pillar of fire. On Ohio street the danger struck consternation into householders. The wind which veered a little to the north was yet violent and

THREATENED TO SWEEP THE BUILDINGS

from Pennsylvania avenue to Delaware street. The first dwelling house back of the "new hotel" was Dr. Eggert's. Seeing that if the direction of the wind was not changed soon his place must also go, preparations for clearing out were begun. A hundred helping hands were ready. The passage from the doors being insufficient to remove all the portable property quickly enough, the front windows were forced out, and in a very short time the rooms were mostly stripped of everything except the paper on the wall. In front of the house, on the walk, lay pieces of broken glass, crockery and stoneware. The lights inside showed the rooms on the first floor to be empty. In the next house (that of Mr. Morris Eddy), the same scenes were enacted. Furniture, valuables, buckets full of every conceivable household article were being taken out and carried to neighboring houses beyond the reach of the flame or sparks. The fire having begun before the usual time for church services, very few had, as yet, left their homes. As before stated, it seemed possible and probable that Christian Chapel would be one of the buildings to suffer. Considerable of the church furniture was therefore removed, the small organ being taken out and played in a house across the way. In the residences of Mrs. Dr. Surin and Mrs. Andrew Wallace the household goods and gods were also taken out. People were all employed in taking away the wagons, wheels and bodies of wagons, &c., from the Studebaker wagon establishment, on Delaware street, and being rolled away to places where there was less danger of their destruction. Over the market fell the sparks in showers, and many of the passers-by were forced to turn back and walk another square away. For some time after the breaking out of the fire, it was thought that the Journal building must share the fate of of the Vajen block. Streams of water were poured upon it continually, and every effort made to prevent the slightest foothold being obtained by the fire. As the flames reached the southern part of the block the walls of the Journal office

GREW INTENSELY HOT.

The water from the hose no sooner struck the walls than it was converted into steam. Inside, the inmates could feel the scorching heat, and were apprehensive for a time that they would have to vacate the premises. Had the wind changed to northeast or east, the fate of the building can be easily imagined. By eight o'clock the fire had done its worst in Vajen's block, and though the flames were yet fierce they had diminished greatly for want of anything to feed upon. The glow on the buildings around and from other buildings which had by this time caught on fire was hardly less than at first. The block in the brief space of half an hour was changed from an ornament and thing of beauty to an irregular mass of broken walls, with its cornice (that had been bent and curled and twisted as though made of the slightest and weakest wire) swept away; its handsome facade ruined and only the walls left to show what it once had been. Vajen's block was begun last summer, and had not cold weather intervened, would doubtless have been in a much completer state. It had a frontage of 163 feet, was four stories high, with an ornamental iron front. Its depth was 120 feet. On the first floor there were nine store rooms; the uppers being designed for offices, sleeping apartments, etc. The estimated cost when finished was $160,000. The following are the owners. Mr. J. H. Vajen, who occupied what was known as "Vajen's exchange block," and had a frontage of 178 feet on Pensylvania street. His loss is estimated at $70,000 on which there was no insurance. William Mansur owned the middle of the block, having a frontage of 39 feet. His loss is estimated at $25,000, on which there was no insurance. Mr. John C. Wright owned the north part of the block (a frontage of 40 feet three inches.) His loss he estimated last night to be $15,000, on which he had an insurance of $5,000. All the three owners stated to a Sentinel representative that it was their intention to rebuild as soon as possible. They did not seem downcast by their heavy losses, but with usual American pluck under adverse were cheery and bright as ever. They doubtless will before long carry out their plans as expressed last night, "Mercantile row" will be even handsomer than it had until last night's disaster given token of being.

GLEANINGS FROM THE FIELD.

THE CROWD IN THE STREETS—THE WORK OF THE ENGINES—THE APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDINGS—GUESSES AND CRITICISMS—THE WORK OF THE FUTURE.

For fully a half hour after the lurid columns began to lighten the sky, the crowds, rushing circleward were led to suppose that the Journal building was in flames. From Meridian street this was confirmed, the long, low building in the rear was completely hidden by the brilliant light beyond. Presently, however, figures rushing hither and thither excitedly, could be seen outlined against the burning background and the real point of destruction became distinct. For a time, however, the Journal building seemed doomed. The heat, as far over as the Sentinel building, was intense; the sparks absolutely reddening the pavement as they whirled backward over the pit of fire. Viewed from the rear, that is the Circle and the Sentinel building, the spectacle was threateningly grand. Mountains of flame seemed to spout from the top of the tall front of the Journal, which stood like an impenetrable curtain before the fire. An engine standing at the corner drowned the murmur of voices and the rushing of feet as the crowd passed forward, eager to see and fearing to be overwhelmed by the fire or water. Horses coming to the Circle on Meridian, struck unexpectedly by the glare from the pile beyond would plunge and rear, and finally lead by friendly hands, would disappear from the scene. But with all the startling destruction and dimensions, there was comparatively good order, with little of the boisterousness which frequently marks fires of such proportion. The sidewalks were filled with a wondering but by no means unruly crowd, and there were no arrests for violence or stealing. One super-serviceable policeman took it upon himself to arrest and convey to the station house, two young gentlemen who were on their way to their room, which was in the vicinity of the fire. In the confusion of the moment his zeal overcame his discretion, and instead of attending to the fire, he marched the astonished young men off to the durance, which, they didn't endure, however. When Martindales block was seen in flames, it was the general fear that the corner opposite the postoffice, on Pennsylvania, must surely go, and fears were entertained for everything in the vicinity down as far as Baldwin's block. These establishments valuables were looked after with solicitude, every swoop of the flames strengthening the purpose of the tenants to be up and doing. In the Journal building which stood the severest test there was anxiety and indecision. Whether to try and get the paper out was the question. At eight o'clock orders were given in the Sentinel office to make ready to receive the Journal folks and help them out with their paper, as from this point, it looked certain that the Journal would be swallowed in the flaming volcano. The managers were solicitous too. Men stood ready in the press room, to clear away the wall and carry out the enormous pile of machinery which makes up the press, and the printers stood equipped in light marching order, ready to take the cases and types to a less torrid clime. The walls next to the flames fairly cracked with the purgatorial test put upon them and sprays falling from the pipes, evaporated instantly into puffs of steam. The lookers on gave up the building, but by a miracle it was saved.

The criticisms on the management of the fire were free and frequent. One gentleman remarked, as a particularly bad failure in the play became apparent, "I will run over to the druggist's and get a syringe, then we shall have a chance." A group of gentlemen consisting of one or two members of the council stood in the vicinity of Lang's as the havoc spread, and detecting a stream which for the first time reached above the second story, they hastened to examine the source, and found it to be the water works pipe—the engines pegging away feebly at the lower stories. The verdict from that source was prompt and emphatic that the machines or their managers were very inefficient. Others who had watched from the first declared that the streams thrown into Vajen's building were not strong enough to make the slightest palpable sign of effect. A hose stream thrown from the rear of Langs restraurant and Morrison's house did more service in saving the rear of the Journal building and staying the backward spread of the fire than all the efforts at the fire department.

The destruction of the buildings is a serious blow to the prospects of that portion of the city. Great calculations had been made by retail merchants, upon the rapid growth of trade, so soon as the magnificent new blocks were fully completed. The loss to Mr. Sheet's is particularly trying. He had by heroic endeavors brought his place to the verge of occupation and men were at work preparing for tenants when by this calamitous hours work, the fruits of years have been swept away. He means however to go squarely to work again, relieve the burden on the property which will entitle him to the $50,000 insurance taken in the name of Bissel & Co., and carry out the original purpose. So far as could be ascertained, all the gentlemen involved in the disaster are resolute in continuing the building without delay. It almost pays to have a big fire, to see the plucky stuff such men are made of. These are the men who build cities, and they should be known and recognized. Indianapolis can ill afford to lose so much real wealth as perished last night, but it is the fortune of fire, and we must buckle to it and repair our waste places.

RAKINGS FROM THE RUINS.

AFTER THE CONFLICT—COUNTING THE COST—VARIOUS AND SUNDRY PARAGRAPHS.

The account of the Sunday night fire was so full and complete in the Sentinel yesterday, that little of interest is left for this morning. Investigations continued yesterday show that the estimates of losses, as first given, are about as nearly correct as it will be possible to make them until exact computations can be made. It may be well to recapitulate the losses more in detail than it was convenient to do Sunday night.

Harry H. Sheets, Sheets' block	$100,000
J. H. Vajen, Exchange block	50 000
William Mansur, Exchange block	25,000
John C. Wright, Exchange block	15,000
E. B. Martindale, Martindale's block	30,000
A. A. Scott, groceries	4,000
McCune & Sons, tea's, coffee's, etc	1,000
J. B. Smith, dyeing establishment	1,000
C. C. Dennis' creditors, drugs	1,500
Keyser & Smith, gas fixtures	5,000
Wm. D. Frootman, oysters	500
Maurice & Spahr, boots and shoes	2,000
W. L. Wood, sunlight fluid, etc	600
—— Casteel, cigars	1,000
C. F. Meyer, pictures	1,000
J. B. Martindale, furniture, books, etc	6,000
H. H. Walker, office furniture	300
Dr. Bancroft, office furniture	200
Dr. Good, office furniture	500
Giles Smith, office furniture	200
John W. Blake, office furniture	500
G. W. New, bedroom furniture	300
F. R Drake, bed-room furniture	100
Mrs. Abbott, millinery	300
E. Vickers, bedding, etc	100
James Smith, bedding, etc	100
Dr. Purcell, dentist	2,500
Routier & Hill, lumber	10,000
Unreported losses, say	1,200
Total	$280,000

INSURANCE.

John C. Wright, Hartford company	$ 5,000
E. B. Martindale, Home, North British, National and Connecticut	25,000
A. A. Scott, American Republic	2,000
C. C. Dennis, Hartford company	1,500
Keyser & Smith, London Assurance	3,000
McCune & Sons, Amazon, Cincinnati	1,000
Maurice & Spahr, Imperial, London	1,000
W. L. Wood, Franklin, Indianapolis	400
C. F. Meyer	400
J. B. Martindale	500
Dr. Purcell	1,000
Total insurance	$40,800

It was understood that the Sheets block was insured by Bissell & Co. to the amount of $50,000; but Judge Martindale, their agent, says it is not so, consequently the damage done to the building is a total loss, and Harry Sheets the sole loser. Mr. Casteel, the cigar man, and Mrs. Abbott are in reality the heaviest losers, since they lose all they possessed in the world. A policy of Mr. Casteel had expired some two weeks before the fire, which, as he intended soon to remove, had not been renewed.

PROSPECTIVE AND RETROSPECTIVE.

As far as ascertained by a Sentinel representative, but one person in the city (able to get there) was absent from the fire of Sunday night. This was a lady, whose husband, in his excitement, ran away from the house leaving her to follow if she choose; which she didn't. In a general way, one may say all Indianapolis was there. Yesterday, from sunrise to sunset, the ruins and their immediate vicinity were visited by crowds of people who wished to see how the place looked by daylight. Police guarded Martindale's block until all the goods in the stores were taken away. The debris had been removed sufficiently to allow the passage of street cars.

Those who were around the ruins yesterday were evidently forcibly impressed with the idea that iron fronts are not of much account in a fire. The massive castings were bent and indented and the iron girders twisted by the heat. Old-fashioned, thoroughly burnt, brick seems to be about the only thing that fire has comparatively little effect upon. In the Martindale block Messrs. McKillop & Co., commercial reporters, met with exceedingly good fortune. All their papers, reports, records and books, were saved uninjured, and the business will be continued without interruption. Judge E. B. Martindale, and J. B. Martindale, as well as several of those having rooms in the Martindale block, have taken up quarters in the Hubbard block on South Meridian street. With the immense amount of loose material that now lies in the burnt section, it will be some time before pedestrians can pass with either comfort or safety. Two streams of water were kept pouring in the cellar of the Vajen block, by No. 5 and No. 6 reels, the fire having broken out again there during the forenoon. The "Talbott block" floor, which had been laid with much care and nicety [for a teselated floor when completed], is badly broken on the northern half, and the cellar is nearly filled with the ruined walls which fell into it Sunday night. The Sheets block, though badly "gutted" and broken, has many of its inner walls yet good and strong.

THE FUTURE

promises to make the burnt section even better than before. Mr. Routier, the contractor, is in favor of brick for future buildings, as iron fronts, though handsomer, are, as has been proven, rather not quite the thing. The work of rebuilding Mercantile row will begin as soon as the rubbish can be cleared away. Judge Martindale is undecided yet as to what will be done. It is his desire to pull down the whole building (Martindale block) and erect a building similar in design to the one planned on Market street. The space from Market street to the alley next to Sheet's block will be filled in and no small buildings will any longer hide their diminished heads on the side of the street. If the insurance companies will agree to the plan as above mentioned, the fire will be the cause of making that part of the city much handsomer than it would otherwise have been, and in a much shorter space of time.

THE RAILROAD PROBLEM.

A WORD OF COUNSEL.

REPORTS OF THE ILLINOIS RAILROAD OFFICERS—NOT SO FAIR AS THEY SEEM—SO GOVERNMENT RAILROADS WANTED.

To the Editor of the Sentinel:

SIR: I notice in the financial columns of the Sentinel this morning, some extracts from the annual reports of two of the leading railway corporations of Illinois. The editorial comment, while not directly endorsing the positions advanced, is so worded as to leave the impression that the discussion of the transportation question in that state has been conducted as "an undignified squabble," and that the "level heads" are all in the railway offices. Having given the subject some attention, and having some personal knowledge of the workings of the much abused law, a statement in relation thereto may have some interest to your readers, especially as it is quite probable that a similar law will be under consideration at the next session of the Indiana legislature. I will not intrude upon your space to notice in detail the several assumptions of the officers referred to. There is quite as much of assurance as of dignity in their statement of the case. As they propose to submit to the arbitration of the courts, it is quite becoming, and quite natural that they should keep a "stiff upper lip." They have learned that as the world judges, assurance is better than sense, but it may be politic to remember that the world moves, that though there may be more shams, they must be concocted with more ingenuity than in the years a-gone, and that at the best they are sooner or later detached. A varied business experience, including several years of railroad superintendence, has taught me that good, sound, common sense is a winning card as well in railway management as in other branches of business, and the people of Illinois have chosen to entrust the practical control of their railway interests to a board of three commissioners who possess a very fair share of that commendable quality. In assuming that all the intelligence necessary in the management of railways is embodied in the present list of officers, they would apparently wish to convey the idea that a few years of experience—usually in a single department—in a railway office creates a class of men of a higher

SCALE OF INTELLIGENCE

than ordinary mortals. It is perhaps true that the commissioners do not know the special wants and special circumstances of the respective companies, and for this the railway officials themselves are responsible. They have studiously ignored the board in pursuance of their policy to test the matter in the courts. Although they have had free access to the commissioners, and although they very well know that those gentlemen have been prompted through all their action, by the desire to dispense even-handed justice to the companies, as well as to the people, they have persistently arrayed themselves in opposition. They have engaged in a contest which may possibly be prolonged through a series of years, but which can have only one ending. Abuses of the privileges granted to the corporations have become so flagrant and unbearable that the people have arisen in their might to correct the evil. They may be thwarted for a time, since they have sought the remedy through the peaceful medium of the ballot-box, but public opinion which of late is prompt to assert itself, will, in the nature of things, finally win. The sense of the people asks no unjust concessions from the railway companies. Their utility is fully recognized; a just compensation for every service performed, for every dollar of money legitimately invested, will be cheerfully granted, but they do not expect that their kindness will be imposed upon, and if their demands for simple justice are to be met with insult and with threats, they hold in their ballots the power to enforce their demands. It may be worthy a thought whether it would not be a very good stroke of policy for the companies to change their tactics somewhat. They insist that they only want exact justice, and this is all that the people have ever demanded. May not this be best obtained by friendly discussions, looking to a mutual understanding. I speak advisedly when I assert that the board of commissioners of Illinois would, on behalf of the people, meet any officers representing the railway interest.

ON HALF-WAY GROUND.

To those who read some of the leading Illinois papers, it would appear quite evident that the present law was a perfect tissue of inconsistencies, and at the beginning of the present legislative session its friends were almost alarmed at the prospect of its repeal, but when it came to a vote it was sustained without amendment by an overwhelming majority. My communication has already exceeded the limit I had intended, but there is one question of momentous importance now before congress, to which, with your permission, I may briefly refer. I can hardly believe it possible that our congress is so corrupt as to seriously entertain and pass such a law as is proposed under the plea of regulating commerce between the states. It has surprised me beyond measure to see the grangers encouraging such action through the undiscussed recommendation of the grand master. Such playing into the hands of the monopolists is as incomprehensible as it is not presumable that an officer in such high position is ignorant of the consequences involved. If congress legislates for the through lines which control by their connections all of the local state lines, what is left for the states to act upon? Really and in fact, nothing at all. State legislation cannot interfere with national legislation which outranks it, and in all questions of issue—and such would certainly arise with distinct systems in the same state—the national commission would overshadow the state body. Has past experience been sufficiently gratifying to justify us in entrusting to a commission of nine persons the managment of a railway system in which three thousand millions of dollars is involved? One half of this immense sum is now practically controlled by less than a dozen private individuals who have never shown any hesitation about employing all the money necessary to compass their ends. A million a piece to each of the commissioners would be a trivial affair. We may secure a first nine who can not be bribed (?) but with such inducements there would soon be means found to make up that committee "to suit." With such a committee appointed by Congress the people would have occasion to curse their luck for years to come, while the scheming managers would snap their fingers in high glee. Let such a bill pass congress, and within five years the senators and representatives in that body will be retorting to the demands of an outraged people as we have before heard to our disgust, "we followed your instructions, you, the grangers are responsible for our action." This subject of transportation has been more thoroughly discussed in Illinois than elsewhere, through the medium of the open meetings under the auspices of the state farmers' association, and it is worthy of note that at the Decatur convention but one voice was heard out of over three hundred representative men present in favor of congressional interference. The action of the convention was emphatically against it.

CHARLES W. GREENE,
Indianapolis, March 18, 1874.

At a late temperance meeting in New York, Mr. J. N. Stearns related the following anecdote of Horace Greeley: "Three years ago," he said in a loud voice, "a Doctor of Divinity (Dr. Ganse) said at a temperance mass meeting that he believed that the Lord Jesus Christ made and drank intoxicating liquors. Horace Greeley [applause], that staunch friend of total abstinence, walked forward in his white coat, and folding his hands sleepily before him said in that thin, piping voice you all remember, 'You can't make me believe my Lord ever made and drank intoxicating wine.' Nor me either,' shouted a methodist minister in the pulpit, and continued Mr. Stearns, the house re-echoed with applause."

A bill has been introduced in the New York legislature for the creation of a board of railroad commissioners, to be invested with a general supervision over all the railroads in the state. The powers given to the commission are mainly to procure and furnish to the legislature accurate information relative to the management of the railroads of the state and the grievances to which the people are subjected, which existing laws fail to supply. The commissioners are to be three in number, appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate, and are to hold office for two, three and four years each, as may be determined by lot. Their salaries are $10,000 each.

Prof. Richard Proctor is said to be a devout Roman Catholic, and to have no sympathies with what is generally known as spiritualism.