COL. BENTON'S HISTORY.

[EXTRACT FROM COL. BENTON'S "THIRTY YEARS IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE," IN COURSE OF PUBLICATION.]

Anno 1826.—*John Quincy Adams, President.—Duel between Mr. Clay and Mr. Randolph.*

It was Saturday, the first day of April, towards noon, the Senate not being that day in session, that Mr. Randolph came to my room at Brown's Hotel, and (without explaining the reason of the question) asked me if I was the blood-relation of Mrs. Clay? I answered that I was, and he immediately replied that that put an end to a request that he had wished to make of me, and then went on to tell me that he had just received a challenge from Mr. Clay, had accepted it, was ready to go out, and would apply to Col. Tatnall to be his second. Before leaving he told me he would make my bosom the depository of a secret which he would commit to no other person: it was, that he did not intend to fire at Mr. Clay. He told it to me because he wanted a witness of his intention, and did not mean to tell it to his second, or anybody else; and enjoined inviolable secrecy until the duel was over. This was the first notice I had of the affair.

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All hope of accommodation having vanished, the seconds proceeded to arrange for the duel. The afternoon of Saturday, the 8th of April, was fixed upon for the time; the right bank of the Potomac, within the State of Virginia, above the Little Falls bridge, was the place, pistols the weapons, distance ten paces; each party to be attended by two seconds and a surgeon, and myself at liberty to attend as a mutual friend. There was to be no practising with pistols, and there was none; and the words "one," "two," "three," "stop," after the word "fire," were, by agreement between the seconds, and for the humane purpose of reducing the results as near as possible to chance, to be given out in quick succession. The Virginia side of the Potomac was taken at the instance of Mr. Randolph. He went out as a Virginia Senator, refusing to compromise that character, and, if he fell in defence of its rights, Virginia soil was to him the chosen ground to receive his blood. There was a statute of the State against duelling within her limits; but, as he merely went out to receive a fire without returning it, he deemed that no fighting, and consequently no breach of her statute. This reason for choosing Virginia could only be explained to me, as I alone was the depository of his secret. The week's delay which the seconds had contrived, was about expiring. It was Friday evening, or rather night, when I went to see Mr. Clay the last time before the duel. There had been some alienation between us since the time of the Presidential election in the House of Representatives, and I wished to give evidence that there was nothing personal in it. The family were in the parlor—company present—and some of it stayed late. The youngest child, I believe James, went to sleep on the sofa—a circumstance which availed me for a purpose the next day. Mrs. Clay was, as always since the death of her daughters, the picture of desolation, but calm, conversible, and without the slightest apparent consciousness of the impending event. When all were gone, and she also had left the parlor, I did what I came for, and said to Mr. Clay, that, notwithstanding our late political differences, my personal feeling were the same as formerly, and that, in whatever concerned his life or honor, my best wishes were with him. He expressed his gratification at the visit and the declaration, and said it was what he would have expected of me. We parted at midnight.

Saturday, the 8th of April—the day for the duel—had come, and almost the hour. It was noon, and the meeting was to take place at 4 o'clock. I had gone to see Mr. Randolph before the hour, and for a purpose; and, besides, it was so far on the way, as he lived half way to Georgetown, and we had to pass through that place to cross the Potomac into Virginia at the Little Falls Bridge. I had heard nothing from him on the point of not returning the fire since the first communication to that effect eight days before. I had no reason to doubt the steadiness of his determination, but felt a desire to have some fresh assurance of it after so many days' delay, and so near approach of the trying moment. I knew it would not do ask him the question—any question which would imply a doubt of his word. His sensitive feelings would be hurt and annoyed at it. So I fell upon a scheme to get at the inquiry without seeming to make it. I told him of my visit to Mr. Clay the night before—of the late sitting—the child asleep—the unconscious tranquility of Mrs. Clay; and added, I could not help reflecting how different all that might be the next night. He understood me perfectly, and immediately said, with a quiet nod of look and expression which seemed to rebuke an unworthy doubt, "*I shall do nothing to disturb the sleep of the child or the repose of the mother,*" and went on with his employment—his seconds being engaged in their preparations in a different room—which was, making codicils to his will, all in the way of remembrance to friends; the bequests slight in value, but invaluable in tenderness of feeling and beauty of expression, and always appropriate to the receiver. To Mr. Macon he gave some English shillings, to keep the game when he played whist. His namesake, John Randolph Bryan, then at school in Baltimore, and since married to his niece, was sent for to see him, but sent off before the hour for going out, to save the boy from a possible shock at seeing him brought back. He wanted some gold—that coin not being then in circulation, and only to be obtained by favor or purchase—and sent his faithful man, Johnny, to the United States Branch Bank to get a few pieces, American being the kind asked for. Johnny returned without the gold, and delivered the excuse that the bank had none. Instantly his clear silver-toned voice was heard above its natural pitch, exclaiming, "Their name is legion! and they are liars from the beginning. Johnny, bring me my horse." His own saddle-horse was brought him—for he never rode Johnny's, nor Johnny his, though both, and all his hundred horses, were of the finest English blood—and rode off to the bank down Pennsylvania avenue, now Corcoran & Riggs's—Johnny following, as always, forty paces behind. Arrived at the Bank, this scene, according to my informant, took place:

"Mr. Randolph asked for the state of his account, was shown it, and found to be some four thousand dollars in his favor. He asked for it. The teller took up packages of bills, and civilly asked in what sized notes he would have it. 'I want money,' said Mr. Randolph, putting emphasis on the word; and at that time it required a bold man to intimate that United States Bank notes were not money. The teller, beginning to understand him, and willing to make sure, said, inquiringly, 'You want silver?' 'I want my money!' was the reply. Then the teller, lifting boxes to the counter, said politely: 'Have you a cart, Mr. Randolph, to put it in?' 'That is my business sir,' said he. By that time the attention of the Cashier (Mr. Richard Smith) was attracted to what was going on, came up, and understanding the question, and its cause, told Mr. Randolph there was a mistake in the answer given to his servant; that they had gold, and he should have what he wanted."

In fact, he had only applied for a few pieces, which he wanted for a special purpose. This brought about a compromise. The pieces of gold were received, the cart and the silver dispensed with; but the account in bank was closed, and a check taken for the amount on New York. He returned and delivered me a sealed paper, which I was to open if he was killed—give back to him if he was not; also an open slip, which I was to read before I got to the ground. This slip was a request to feel in his breeches pocket, if he was killed, and find so many pieces of gold—I believe nine—take three for myself, and give the same number to Tatnall and Hamilton each, to make seals to wear in remembrance of him. We were all three at Mr. Randolph's lodgings then, and soon sat out, Mr. Randolph and his seconds in a carriage, I following him on horseback.

I have already said that the count was to be quick after giving the word "fire," and for a reason which could not be told by the principals. To Mr. Randolph, who did not mean to fire, and who, though agreeing to be shot at, had no desire to be hit, this rapidity of counting out the time and quick arrival at the command "stop" presented no objection. With Mr. Clay it was different. With him it was all a real transaction, and gave rise to some proposal for more deliberateness in counting off the time, which being communicated to Col. Tatnall, and by him to Mr. Randolph, had an ill effect upon his feelings, and, aided by an untoward accident on the ground, unsettled for a moment the noble determination which he had formed not to fire at Mr. Clay. I now give the words of Gen. Jesup:

"When I repeated to Mr. Clay the 'word' in the manner in which it would be given, he expressed some apprehension that, as he was not accustomed to the use of the pistol, he might not be able to fire within the time, and for that reason alone desired that it might be prolonged. I mentioned to Col. Tatnall the desire of Mr. Clay. He replied, 'If you insist upon it, the time must be prolonged, but I should very much regret it.' I informed him I did not insist upon prolonging the time, and I was sure Mr. Clay would acquiesce. The original agreement was carried out."

I knew nothing of this until it was too late to speak with the seconds or principals. I had crossed the Little Falls bridge just after them, and come to the place where the servants and carriages had stopped. I saw none of the gentlemen, and supposed they had all gone to the spot where the ground was being marked off; but on speaking to Johnny, Mr. Randolph, who was still in his carriage and heard my voice, looked out from the window, and said to me: "Colonel, since I saw you, and since I have been in this carriage, I have heard something which *may* make me change my determination. Col. Hamilton will give you a note which will explain it." Col. Hamilton was then in the carriage, and gave me the note, in the course of the evening, of which Mr. Randolph spoke. I readily comprehended that this possible change of determination related to his firing; but the emphasis with which he pronounced the word "*may*" clearly showed that his mind was undecided, and left it doubtful whether he would fire or not. No further conversation took place between us; the preparations for the duel were finished; the parties went to their places; and I went forward to a piece of rising ground, from which I could see what passed and hear what was said. The faithful Johnny followed me close, speaking not a word, but evincing the deepest anxiety for his beloved master. The place was a thick forest, and the immediate spot a little depression, or basin, in which the parties stood. The principals saluted each other courteously as they took their stands. Col. Tatnall had won the choice of position, which gave to Gen. Jesup the delivery of the word. They stood on a line east and west—a small stump just behind Mr. Clay; a low gravelly bank rose just behind Mr. Randolph. This latter asked Gen. Jesup to repeat the word as he would give it; and while in the act of doing so, and Mr. Randolph adjusting the butt of his pistol to his hand, the muzzle pointing downwards, and almost to the ground, it fired. Instantly Mr. Randolph turned to Col. Tatnall and said: "I protested against that hair trigger." Col. Tatnall took blame to himself for having sprung the hair. Mr. Clay had not then received his pistol. Mr. Johnson, (Josiah,) one of his seconds, was carrying it to him, and still several steps from him. This untimely fire, though clearly an accident, necessarily gave rise to some remarks, and a species of inquiry, which was conducted with the utmost delicacy, but which, in itself, was of a nature to be inexpressibly painful to a gentleman's feelings. Mr. Clay stopped it with the generous remark that the fire was clearly an accident, and it was so unanimously decided. Another pistol was immediately furnished; an exchange of shots took place, and, happily, without effect upon the persons. Mr. Randolph's bullet struck the stump behind Mr. Clay, and Mr. Clay's knocked up the earth and gravel behind Mr. Randolph, and in a line with the level of his hips, both bullets having gone so true and close that it was a marvel how they missed. The moment had come for me to interpose. I went in among the parties and offered my mediation, but nothing could be done. Mr. Clay said, with that wave of the hand with which he was accustomed to put away a trifle, "*This is child's play!*" and required another fire. Mr. Randolph also demanded another fire. The seconds were directed to reload. While this was doing I prevailed on Mr. Randolph to walk away from his post, and renewed to him, more pressingly than ever, my importunities to yield to some accommodation; but I found him more determined than I had ever seen him, and for the first time impatient, and seemingly annoyed and dissatisfied at what I was doing. He was indeed annoyed and dissatisfied. The accidental fire of his pistol preyed upon his feelings. He was doubly chagrined at it, both as a circumstance susceptible in itself of an unfair interpretation, and as having been the immediate and controlling cause of his firing at Mr. Clay. He regretted this fire the instant it was over. He felt that it had subjected him to imputations from which he knew himself to be free—a desire to kill Mr. Clay, and a contempt for the laws of his beloved State; and the annoyances which he felt at these vexatious circumstances revived his original determination, and decided him irrevocably to carry it out.

It was in this interval that he told me what he had heard since we parted, and to which he alluded when he spoke to me from the window of the carriage. It was to this effect: That he had been informed by Col. Tatnall that it was proposed to give out the words with more deliberateness, so as to prolong the time for taking aim.—This information grated harshly upon his feelings. It unsettled his purpose, and brought his mind to the inquiry (as he now told me, and as I found it expressed in the note which he had immediately written in pencil to apprize me of his possible change) whether, under these circumstances, he might not "*disable*" his adversary?—This note is so characteristic, and such an essential part of this affair, that I here give its very words, so far as relates to this point. It ran thus:

"Information received from Col. Tatnall since I got into the carriage *may* induce me to change my mind, of not returning Mr. Clay's fire. I seek not his death. I would not have his blood upon my hands—it will not be upon my soul if shed in self-defence—for the world. He has determined, by the use of a long, preparatory caution by words, to get time to kill me. May I not, then, disable him? Yes, if I please."

It has been seen by the statement of Gen. Jesup, already given, that this "*information*" was a misapprehension; that Mr. Clay had not applied for a prolongation of time for the purpose of getting sure aim, but only to enable his unused hand, long unfamiliar with the pistol, to fire within the limited time; that there was no prolongation, in fact, either granted or insisted upon; but he was in doubt, and Gen. Jesup having won the word, he was having him repeat it in the way he was to give it out when his finger touched the hair-trigger. How unfortunate that I did not know of this in time to speak to Gen. Jesup, when one word from him would have set all right, and saved the imminent risks incured! This inquiry, "May I not disable him?" was still on Mr. Randolph's mind, and dependant for its solution on the rising incidents of the moment, when the accidental fire of his pistol gave the turn to his feelings which solved the doubt. But he declared to me that he had not aimed at the life of Mr. Clay; that he did not level as high as the knees—not higher than the knee-band; "for it was no mercy to shoot a man in the knee;" that his only object was to disable him and spoil his aim. And then added, with a beauty of expression and a depth of feeling which no studied oratory can ever attain, and which I shall never forget, these impressive words: "*I would not have seen him fall mortally, or even doubtfully wounded, for all the land that is watered by the King of Floods and all his tributary streams.*" He left me to resume his post, utterly refusing to explain out of the Senate any thing that he had said in it, and with the positive declaration that he would not return the next fire. I withdrew a little way into the woods, and kept my eyes fixed on Mr. Randolph, who I then knew to be the only one in danger. I saw him receive the fire of Mr. Clay, saw the gravel knocked up in the same place, saw Mr. Randolph raise his pistol—discharge it in the air; heard him say, "*I do not fire at you, Mr. Clay!*" and immediately advancing and offering his hand. He was met in the same spirit. They met half way, shook hands, Mr. Randolph saying jocosely, "*You owe me a coat, Mr. Clay*—(the bullet had passed through the skirt of the coat, very near the hip)—to which Mr. Clay promptly and happily replied, "*I am glad the debt is no greater.*" I had come up, and was prompt to proclaim what I had been obliged to keep secret for eight days. The joy of all was extreme at this happy termination of a most critical affair, and we immediately left, with lighter hearts than we brought. I stopped to sup with Mr. Randolph and his friends—none of us wanted dinner that day—and had a characteristic time of it. A runner came in from the bank to say that they had overpaid him, by mistake, $130 that day. He answered, "I believe *it is your rule not to correct mistakes, except at the time, and at your counter.*" And with that answer the runner had to return. When gone, Mr. Randolph said, "*I will pay it on Monday: people must be honest, if banks are not.*" He asked for the scaled paper he had given me, opened it, took out a check for $1,000, drawn in my favor, and with which I was requested to have him carried, if killed, to Virginia, and buried under his patrimonial oaks—not let him be buried at Washington, with a hundred hacks after him. He took the gold from his left breeches pocket, and said to us, (Hamilton, Tatnall, and I,) "Gentlemen, Clay's bad shooting shan't rob you of your seals. I am going to London, and will have them made for you," which he did, and most characteristically, so far as mine was concerned. He went to the herald's office in London and inquired for the Benton family, of which I had often told him there was none, as we only dated on that side from my grandfather in North Carolina. But the name was found, and with it a coat of arms—among the quarterings a lion rampant. That is the family, said he, and had the arms engraved on the seal, the same which I have since habitually worn, and added the motto, *Factis non verbis*, of which he was afterwards accustomed to say the *non* should be changed into *et*. But, enough. I run into these details, not merely to relate an event, but to show character, and if I have not done it, it is not for want of material, but of ability to use it.

On Monday the parties exchanged cards, and social relations were formally and courteously restored. It was about the last high-toned duel that I have witnessed, and among the highest-toned that I have ever witnessed, and so happily conducted to a fortunate issue—a result due to the noble character of the seconds as well as to the generous and heroic spirit of the principals. Certainly duelling is bad, and has been put down, but not quite so bad as its substitute—revolvers, bowie-knives, blackguarding, and street-assassinations under the pretext of self-defence.

General Scott.—It will be remembered by our readers that General Scott met with a severe accident some months since while walking in North street. We learn that he is very slowly recovering the use of his arm, but it is very doubtful if he will ever have the full use of it restored to him. He is now staying at West Point for the benefit of his health.—*N. Y. Express.*

A Profitable Excommunication.—The article in the Washington Union (says the Providence Journal) "excommunicating the Buffalo Republic—said to have received, in manuscript, the personal approbation of the President—has been followed by an advertisement worth near $1,000 given to that paper! We suppose the western organ of New York Barnburnerism would like to be excommunicated weekly on the same terms."

And the excommunication of the New York Post will be followed by the appointment of its right-hand man, John A. Dix, Minister to France, or likewise with some fat Government job. The Union excommunicates, the more effectually to humbug the Southern Democracy, while the President deals out material aid to the excommunicated with a more liberal hand. The game is a deep one.—*Richmond Whig.*

Another Screw Loose.—At a *Democratic* celebration of the 4th in Philadelphia the health of President Pierce was drank in silence—the doctrine of the *one term* principle asserted—toasts given by no means complimentary to the Cabinet, and the proceedings manifested such dissatisfaction throughout with the Administration that the Pennsylvanian, the regular Democratic organ, refused to publish them.

The Boston Herald gives the confessions of a dealer in the ardent of that city, who has been sending off varieties down-east since the renowned Maine law passed. He has packed kegs of liquor in molasses casks, headed them in, and filled up with molasses; he has packed them in sugar boxes, filled around with sugar; he has packed them in oil casks, filled around with water, he has placed a piece of sponge saturated with oil over the bung, and covered it with a piece of tin, so that when the cask is rolled over, a little oil will be squeezed out, thus deceiving the most knowing; he has packed them in cheese casks, a hole in the head through which a cheese—white oak—was visible. Such is the ingenuity of trade. Thus does necessity stimulate invention. The truth is, it is a very difficult thing to thead the *critter!*

LETTERS FROM PROFESSOR EMMONS.

DAVIDSON COUNTY, May 28, 1853.

To His Excellency, David S. Reid:

SIR: In my last communication my remarks were confined mostly to the character of the better land and soils of Mecklenburg and Rowan.—These lands are probably the best in the State, their capacities as a whole, or if their producing powers in the aggregate are considered. This view I intended to express, nothwithstanding the fact that in dry seasons they suffer more than others which are much less fertile. But these lands have not been fully tested, though they have been cultivated for more than half a century, perhaps more than a century. They must have been highly productive when they were first tilled. But it appears to me that great productiveness does not belong to first series of years after tillage begins. It is true, that when new lands are cleared of the forest that the first crops require no fertilizers. The growth is spontaneous. The planter sows and his harvest is sure. But when exuberance of fertilizing matter is nearly exhausted and the soil begins to flag, it should by no means be regarded as used up, that it must be abandoned, and that new fields must be cleared. Instead of regarding the soil as having passed its best and most productive period, it should be considered as only subdued and ready for the true system of cultivation. The soils of England, which have been cultivated eighteen hundred years, produce more by the present system of husbandry than they could have produced during their first year of tillage. Parts of New England and New York yield a greater profit than they did at their first settlement, I mean that they will yield a greater number of bushels of wheat and corn than when they were in their virgin state. Hence, the idea that old lands are comparatively worthless should be exploded, and the sooner this is done the better.

Now, to apply the doctrine to the Providence tract, the western Cabarrus, those lying between Concord and Charlotte—and to these may be added the rich red lands of Cleaveland and Caraway—I say to apply this doctrine to these lands, I believe that they are only subdued, and that they are only just now ready to yield their maximum harvest. No one, however, should misunderstand my views, for I do not mean that by pursuing the old plan of cultivation, by treading in the old track, that these lands are capable of producing more than they do now, but it is by tillage, by the use of these appliances which are truly modern that these results can be expected. I have no doubt that many plantations whose yield of cotton is ordinarily 1,000 lbs. may be made to produce 3,000 lbs., and those which yield 800 lbs., 1,200 lbs. My opinion is based on present modes and means, or present labor and present husbandry. If by a slight addition to modes and means, 2,000 lbs. of cotton are produced to the acre, why is it not rational to suppose that by bringing all the present appliances of husbandry to bear upon tillage that such a result may be realized? There is no doctrine which is so important to be incalcated as the foregoing, for so long as planters look upon old soils and old lands as worthless, so long their efforts will be deferred. But when once they are so satisfied of the truth that old lands are susceptible of improvement, and especially, if they can be made to believe that by culture, they are capable of producing more bushels and more weight of corn and cotton per acre, than when the plough first broke up the surface, they will be ready for trying better systems and better modes of husbandry. Well, history sustains this view. All history relating to agriculture sustains it. It is but the experience of the experienced—of those who have tested the doctrine. It is true you will not see it stated in the words in which I have presented it now, for with me it is a deduction from history. I see it in the results of English husbandry, and I see it in the results of the best husbandry both of the south and north in this country.

I am sir, most respectfully, your servant.

E. EMMONS.

MAY 29, 1853.

To His Excellency David S. Reid:

SIR: The subject of improvements of old lands takes a broad field. It might be expected, and perhaps demanded, that I should sustain and carry out the doctrine of the last communication by a statement of details, how old lands should be treated in order to bring up their productiveness to a standard higher than they possessed in the first periods of cultivation. I shall not attempt, however, to do this with any degree of fairness; and before I touch at all upon the subject, I wish to make a remark or two which have a general bearing upon the whole subject. In the first place, agricultural writers, when they propose improvements, are very apt to make them too sweeping. They, for instance, propose deep draining, deep plowing, lime as a fertilizer, etc., or some special mode of procedure in order to obtain a given end. Now, general doctrines are excellent when they are general; but it frequently happens that there are important exceptions. It is not every field which requires draining—some may be injured by it; it is not every field which requires lime, and even when it is required, the conditions are not the same. If the soil is destitute of organic matter, or quite deficient in it, lime, though it may be wanting in the soil, still, without giving also a supply of organic matter, it will be useless; it will fail, and the planter will be disappointed. He will say to his neighbors that he had tried lime and it did no good; he has lost his money and his labor. Now, no sensible man need be told that such a result is doubly bad. The same may be said of phosphate of lime and of guano. If the farmer or planter is unacquainted with the composition of his soil; if he is ignorant of the conditions which are necessary to insure good results, there are many chances to one that he will fail in the use of a recommended mode, or in the use of a good fertilizer. My doctrine, therefore, is that all general doctrines as set forth by writers should be reduced to specialities as far as possible; that is, while the doctrine is set forth in general terms, the conditions which are required for their successful working should be laid down also. But all this would require investigation; it would demand very close observation; and, perhaps, more still, the chemical examination of the soil. Now, I believe that because investigation *is required*, many failures happen to the very best modes; that, though there is a looseness in stating doctrines and facts by writers, yet there is only one source of disappointment; there is remaining a want of expenditure of thought upon the subjects by the farmer himself. There are some men whom I believe are more lavish in the expenditure of money than they are in the expenditure of thought: though the rule generally is, not to expend either, especially in husbandry. There is still another class quite unlike the two former; that class who take in all the doctrines and digest none—whose minds are like a stuffed sausage full of meat, which is not of the least use to the membrane which contains it. Again, some suppose that planting and farming may be successfully prosecuted, on the same plan that a cook makes up her fries and cakes; that is by receipts which tell them how a good crop of corn, tobacco, or wheat may be raised. There is much of this kind of husbandry every where, for if there is no written form of a receipt, there is about the same thing in the brain; there is a routine without thought, which is carried out mechanically. There is no expenditure of thought about the conditions of the soil, or the climate, or peculiarities of the seasons. There is no employment upon which thought might be so profitably expended as agriculture—deep thought, too: but it cannot be given without elementary knowledge. It is true we may think about the result of an experiment, but of its success or failure, we can form no judgment without instruction in the elements of Agriculture.

I am, Sir, most respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
E. EMMONS.

Elective Judiciary.—A letter to the Editors, from Louisiana, remarks, incidentally, "I am sorry to say our elective Judiciary works badly."—It would contradict reason and experience both if it worked otherwise than badly. History teaches the fallacy of this as of many other democratic notions; but her lessons are thrown away upon those who obey only a passion for change, no matter what, and progress, no matter whither.

National Intelligencer.

The Southern democratic papers, without an exception so far as we have observed, justify and applaud the policy of Gen. Pierce in heaping honors and rewards on free-soilers. Their course with reference to this matter is in ignoble contrast with that of many prominent democratic journals and politicians of the North. There, we have seen democrats speaking out boldly and fearlessly in condemnation of the President of their choice, for no other reason than that he had taken the enemies of the South to his bosom. These gentlemen have had the manliness and independence to take a stand in our behalf, which Southern democrats, with all their boasted devotion to Southern rights and jealousy of free-soil influence in the Government, have ignominiously shrunk from assuming. Not a locofoco politician South of the Potomac dares to lift his voice against President Pierce, although that high functionary within the first four months of his administration, has done precisely what Southern Democrats predicted Gen. Scott would do if elected, and which they deprecated as the most alarming calamity that could befall the South. What confidence can be reposed in the professions of such a party, and how long will the people of the South suffer themselves to be humbugged and deluded by their stale tricks and impostures? These same men raised a great clamor against the Wilmot Proviso a few years ago, and in the midst of the uproar their President, Mr. Polk, signed the Oregon bill with the Wilmot Proviso in it. And yet the rampant democracy of the South had not a word to say in reprobation of the act or its author. They demonstrated then just as they are demonstrating now, that a locofoco President may violate Southern rights with perfect impunity so far as they are concerned, and that their noisy denunciations of freesoil and abolition, are mere sound and fury, signifying nothing.—*Rich. Whig.*

Again in Slavery.—Several weeks since we published a statement that a couple of slaves were manumitted by Mr. Orville Thomas, of Louisiana. Recent occurrences induce us to state again the following facts: Mr. Thomas was on his way to the East, and when he arrived here he was told that he would lose his slaves. He then resolved that he would anticipate their designs, if they had any idea of leaving him, and, on the morning he left, he called them before him and told them they were free, and that he would have their papers made out on his return. They were taken by surprise, and did not seem to express any great degree of joy upon the announcement in which they were so much interested being made to them. On Tuesday morning Mr. Thomas returned, and, as he was about entering the Barnet House, he was met by his boys, who requested the privilege to be taken back again. They protested that they would prefer returning with their master to Louisiana than to remain in Cincinnati and have their freedom. We afterwards learned that the result was just what Mr. Thomas expected, for he did not believe they could take care of themselves.—He received them, and Wednesday morning the party left on the Tishomingo for Louisville, en route for home.—*Cincinnati Gazette.*

A Most Singular and Shocking Accident.—On the 2nd inst., a girl by the name of Sarah Hobbs, about fourteen years old, at work in the Chelmsford Company Mills, Dracutt, met with a shocking accident. She was in the act of combing her hair, and throwing it back it caught on a shaft revolving over her head and wound her over till it carried her up against a beam, cutting off both her thumbs, which had become entangled in her hair, and taking the entire scalp from her head—from her forehead back. The scalp was replaced. We learned from Dr. Kimball, who was called to dress the wound, that she cannot recover.

Lowell Courier.

A Tough Fish Story, but a True One.—Deacon Allen Collin, of this town, while fishing off the south side of the Island, on Thursday last, caught a large shark, which evinced as great a tenacity for life as the real snapping turtle which we read of. For some time after the shark was caught it lay in the bottom of the boat apparently lifeless. A knife was then brought into requisition, the shark's back fin taken off, its throat cut, the entrails taken out and opened, six scappings taken therefrom, and the fish thrown overboard, when, wonderful to relate, it swam off as though nothing remarkable had happened.

Edgartown Gazette.

Population of Britain.—The Census of Great Britain, in 1851, has just been published in two thick volumes. The number of people returned were 21,121,967, of whom 10,386,048 were males, 10,735,919 females, thus giving the ladies the advantage. On the night of the census, 12,924 were sleeping on barges, (vessels,) 9,972 in barns, and 8,277 in the open air or under tents. The number of families in Great Britain were 4,312,388; inhabited houses, 3,648,347. The towns, villages, &c., in Great Britain, 17,150. The British isles 500; inhabited, 175. Great Britain has upwards of 21,000,000, and Ireland upwards of 6,000,000 of souls. Anglesey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man have 50,000, and Guernsey, Lewis, Skye, and Shetland over 20,000. These numbers, however, rapidly descend in the remaining islands from 10,000, 1,000, 500, 400, 100, 40, 20, 10; and finally, at Inchcalm, an appanage of Fife, there is an island with one man only in it.

An Ice-Cream Saloon has just been opened in New York, containing mirrors, it is said, which alone cost $10,000. The ornamental work of the ceiling alone cost $10,000. Whether the quality of the ice-cream is to be improved by all this lavish expenditure is not stated.

A City with Twelve Thousand Inhabitants Destroyed.—In the foreign news by the Atlantic, published yesterday, it is stated that, on the 1st of May, the city of Shiraz, in Persia, was destroyed, with twelve thousand of its inhabitants, by the shock of an earthquake. This is the second city in Persia, and in former years had a population of 40,000 persons, but an earthquake in 1824 nearly destroyed it. It was formerly a place of great beauty, and is celebrated by the Persian poet Hafiz, who was a native of Shiraz, for its beauty and fertility. Since the earthquake of 1824 it has greatly declined in both, most of its public structures having been ruined by that calamity.—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

LATER FROM EUROPE.

The steamer Arabia, arrived at New York brings London and Livepool dates of the 2[illegible]

The aspect of the Turkish question is [illegible] favorable to peace. Telegraphic despatches [illegible] at Paris on the 1st instant state that news [illegible] rejection of the last ultimatum reached St. Petersburgh on the 24th ultimo. The Emperor [illegible] it with much indignation, and had declared, [illegible] strongest language, to the English and French Ambassadors, that even the destruction [illegible] fleet would not prevent his invading Turkey [illegible] obtaining reparation.

The fourth division of the Russian army has been ordered to enter Moldavia. The Russian force on the line of the Black Sea amounts [illegible] 160,000 men.

The Emperor complains of the conduct of [illegible] British Premier, and is said to have forwarded peremptory instructions to M. De Brunow to confine himself to official intercourse with the British Secretary of State.

It was reported that Turkey had formally demanded the armed intervention of the four Powers, and this statement is confirmed.

This unfavorable intelligence had caused a decline in public securities at Paris.

The French and English fleets were anchored off Tenedos, a small but celebrated island situated about fifteen miles southwest of the entrance to the Dardanelles.

Hong Kong dates to May 6th furnish no news, except a rumor that the rebels had captured Nankin and were marching on Pekin.

LIVERPOOL MARKETS, JULY 2.

Cotton has been irregular, and prices of some qualities have slightly declined, while others [illegible] firm. The week reached 60,000 bales, of which speculators took 9,000, and exporters 6,000. Fair Orleans 6¾d a 6¾d; Middling 5¾d a 6d; Mobile and Uplands 6¼d; Middling 5 13-16d.

Breadstuffs had largely advanced and were active demand. Flour had advanced 1s 6d [illegible] barrel during the week, and white corn 1s [illegible] quarter; canal flour 26s. Ohio 26s 6d, white [illegible] yellow corn 30s 6d.

COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE OBSERVER.

PLANK ROADS.

MESSRS. EDITORS: I wish to inform you, [illegible] those that read your paper, that on the [illegible] June, there was a plank road meeting at [illegible] Store, where the F. & W. P. Road passes. The object of the meeting was to consult on the propriety of building a plank road from Thomasville Depot by the way of Normal College, crossing the F. & W. P. R., thence by or near the gold and copper mines in the direction for Jamestown [illegible] pot. Although the notice was short, and in the midst of harvest, there was a respectable [illegible] ay. Mr. Winslow, the President of the F. & W. P. R. Company, being present, was called [illegible] make a speech, which he did, certainly in [illegible] most clear, convincing, and satisfactory manner [illegible] have ever yet heard on the subject of plank [illegible] generally. He can go out on any road [illegible] there is any trading, and get the stock to [illegible] plank road. But to the object which I [illegible] view in writing this communication.

Some of our friends in different sections [illegible] there is great danger of making too many [illegible] that the stock will be injured, &c. My opinion is decidedly the reverse. That is, the more facilities you give the people, the more they [illegible] travel, and the better will be the stock. [illegible] may as well think of destroying a town or city having a great many merchants and stores, as [illegible] think of injuring ourselves by having all the roads and plank roads we can make.

We desired to be a branch or part and parcel [illegible] the F. & W. Plank Road. But that, at present at least, cannot be, for the want of mere [illegible] in the charter; and we must build it on a joint stock company, or abandon the scheme. [illegible] our friends would be ready to subscribe to go to the F. & W. Plank Road, but seem [illegible] backward on a joint stock company. I believe the stock of this road will pay a fair dividend, and upon that belief I am willing to take a [illegible] subscription myself, and loan a company [illegible] Thousand Dollars, to be subscribed to make the road, five years, without interest, (except the dividends from the proceeds of the road,) and [illegible] fear we shall fail to make up the amount necessary to build the road.

If we had your President Winslow a few days we could do it by making appointments along the line. How can we get him? I regret his salary is so small that he cannot be more on the road. If he could spend say half of *his time* on the road, he might not only see and attend to the interest of the road now made and making, but could be of great service in getting up other roads contiguous to and pouring into the lap of Fayetteville, and at the same time making neighboring hoods grow rich.

Pardon this long scrawl, and never give up the ship until North Carolina is what she ought to be.

DAVIDSON

AN EXQUISITE STORY, BY LAMARTINE.

In the tribe of Neggdeh, there was a horse whose fame was spread far and near, and a Bedouin of another tribe, by name Daher, desired extremely to possess it. Having offered in vain for it his camels and his whole wealth, he hit at length upon the following device, by which he hoped to gain the object of his desire. He resolved to stain his face with the juice of an herb, to clothe himself in rags, to tie his legs and [illegible] together, so as to appear like a lame beggar. Thus equipped, he went to wait for Naber, the owner of the horse, who he knew was to pass this way. When he saw Naber approaching on his beautiful steed, he cried out in a weak voice, "I am a poor stranger: for three days I have been unable to move from this spot to seek for food—I am dying, help me, and Heaven will reward you." The Bedouin kindly offered to take him up on his horse and carry him home; but the rogue replied, "I cannot rise; I have no strength left." Naber, touched with pity, dismounted, led his horse to the spot, and, with great difficulty, set the seeming beggar on its back. But no sooner did Daher feel himself in the saddle, than he set spurs to the horse, and galloped off, calling out as he did so, "It is I, Daher. I have got the horse, and am off with it." Naber called after him to stop and listen. Certain of not being pursued, he turned and halted at a short distance from Naber, who was armed with a spear. "You have taken my horse," said the latter. "Since Heaven has willed it, I wish you joy of it; but I do conjure you never to tell any one how you obtained it." "And why not?" said Daher. "Because," said the noble Arab, "another man may be really ill, and men would fear to help him. You would be the cause of many refusing to performs an act of charity, for fear of being duped as I have been." Struck with shame at these words Daher was silent for a moment, then springing from the horse, returned it to its owner, embracing him. Naber made him accompany him to his tent, where they spent a few days together, and became fast friends for life.

China Ware for the White House.—A firm in New York is preparing by order of President Pierce, China table ware for the White House, consisting of 450 pieces together with 55 dozen of glass—*cost seven thousand five hundred dollars.*