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BY GEORGE HOWARD,

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VARIETY.

Congress.

REMARKS OF MR. STRANGE.

In the Senate, on the 17th ult. Mr. Webster submitted a resolution, requesting the Secretary of the Treasury to obtain information and lay the same before the public, respecting the payments of pensions, or of fishing bounties, recently made by the Collector at Boston, in bills of the Commonwealth Bank of that city; on which Mr. W. made a lengthy speech—when

Mr. STRANGE said that, had the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. Webster) introduced his resolution unaccompanied by any remarks, he would have cheerfully voted for it, and opposed the amendment offered by the Senator from Connecticut, (Mr. Niles,) as well as every other amendment calculated to embarrass the original resolution. The Senator from Massachusetts had professed a great unwillingness, and indeed a determined purpose, not to anticipate the debate upon the most important measure likely to engage the attention of Congress at its present session. I leave motives, said Mr. S. to the great Searcher of Hearts; but of the conduct of men, which is immediately before me, I have a right to judge, and to speak of its tendency. The resolution of the Senator from Massachusetts proposes an inquiry, and yet, in anticipation of the answer to his inquiry, he furnishes us with *ex parte* statements of acts, upon which he makes his own comments, answering in advance the very inquiry which he makes. Now, I might appeal to the Senator himself whether, whatever may be his motives, he does not believe the facts he has disclosed, and the comments he has made upon them, are calculated to make an impression upon the mind affecting the great question which has been for some months before the country? The answer, I know, must be affirmative; and I, for one, cannot consent that these facts and comments should go forth unaccompanied by comments from another quarter. Every one knows that the Senator from Massachusetts is in favor of a United States Bank; that he is opposed to the present Administration, and both to the Sub-Treasury system, as it is called, and the system of deposits with the State banks; and he doubtless supposes that the facts he has disclosed have a tendency to convince the country of the necessity of a United States Bank. Now, sir, believing as I do, that they lead to a very different conclusion, (admitting the facts stated to be true, and I am now disposed to question them,) I feel it my duty to say so.

I must, however, in the first place, endeavor to show that the charge of illegal conduct so suddenly brought against the Collector of the port of Boston, and which the Senator from Massachusetts seems to think he has triumphantly made out, is altogether groundless. Allowing the fact assumed by the Senator from Massachusetts, that the Collector had paid out to Government creditors the notes of the Commonwealth Bank of Boston, to be true, I must admit the conduct of the Collector to be in collision with the act of 14th April, 1836; but the proof adduced by the Senator from Massachusetts does not support the existence of that fact. Now, sir, I have no information upon the subject except that derived from the letter read by the gentleman himself; and it is plain, that although both the gentleman himself and his correspondent have jumped to the conclusion, that the collector of the port of Boston had paid out Commonwealth Bank notes to Government creditors, the fact is otherwise. The Collector it is true has given checks upon the Commonwealth Bank, but has not paid out a dollar of its notes; and the two things are, in my judgment, altogether different. The act of April, 1836, prohibits the disbursing officers of the Government from paying out the notes of any bank which are not equivalent to specie. The payment of the notes of the Commonwealth

Bank to a public creditor, would be a violation of this act. But the Collector has not paid out the notes of the Commonwealth Bank, and therefore has not in that respect violated the law. But he has given checks on the Commonwealth Bank. True, and where is the law prohibiting his doing so? On the contrary, is he not in so doing, acting in direct conformity with the law? Your deposit act requires all public officers to deposit the public moneys with State banks to be selected. The Commonwealth Bank was one of those selected, and consequently it was the duty of the Collector to make his deposits there. Being made, what was to become of them? When a public creditor applies for his money, what can the disbursing officer do, but give him a check upon the deposit bank? This check, when presented, is redeemable in specie; and when so presented, and not redeemed, who is to blame, the officer or the bank? If the creditor, who has a right to make his own arrangements with the bank, chooses, rather than protest the check and look to the Government for indemnity, to take the bank's own notes in payment, of whom has he a right to complain? not of the Government surely or its officers. I have thus noticed as briefly as possible this charge of illegal conduct against the officer. A few words now upon the main subject. The Senator from Massachusetts says there should be one common medium for the payment of all public creditors from the highest to the lowest—from Maine to Florida. In this I fully agree with him. The Senator doubtless thinks that a United States Bank only can furnish this common medium, and to this conclusion he wishes the public mind to come. In this I do not agree with him. Gold and silver, in my opinion, are the only things which, by the laws of nature, can be this common and immutable medium. I admit the argument is so far in favor of a United States Bank, as its notes will approximate this great standard more nearly than the notes of local banks. But the argument does not stop there; it leads us irresistibly past a United States Bank to that standard sanctioned by nature, time, and universal usage, by which all values must be tested, the precious metals. Upon this broad foundation the Sub-Treasury is based, supported as it is by the facts, admissions and comments, just furnished by the Senator from Massachusetts. A sort of dialogue has taken place between the Senator from Massachusetts and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. Bayard,) in which it has been brought out that the officers of the Government, or some of them, are in some way connected with the Commonwealth Bank, either as stockholders, or officers, or both. For what purpose these things have been thus dramatically brought forward every one must judge for himself; but if these things be so, they furnish a strong argument for a dissolution of all connection between the Government and the banks. As has been said by the Senator from Connecticut, human nature is human nature, and banks are banks. As long as the public officers may be connected with the banks—and there is no law prohibiting their being so—it is natural that they should think most favorably, and be most anxious for the prosperity, of the banks with which they are so connected, and thus a most subtle and corrupting appeal is made to their hearts to mould their official conduct conformably to the best interests of those banks. The Sub-Treasury system cuts us off from this source of corruption, and thus improves our political condition. Having thus shown, as he conceived, that two strong arguments were furnished by the facts disclosed by the Senator from Massachusetts in favor of the Sub-Treasury system, and that the public officer at Boston, so far as yet appeared, had not transgressed the law, he would not longer detain the Senate.

Mr. Webster, with a view to prevent further debate, read the whole of the letter from which he had chiefly derived the facts which he stated. Mr. W. also repelled the imputation of having any indirect object whatever in view.

Mr. Strange rejoined that this was no personal affair between him and the Senator from Massachusetts, but a matter of great public concern. He had been anxious, therefore, that the present transaction might go before the country in its true light. The effect of the Senator's remarks, whatever might be his object, was to impugn the conduct of the collector of the port of Boston, and to show that nothing could save us from dishonesty in our fiscal dealings, and corruption in the administration of our revenue, but the establishment of a U. S. Bank. Believing that the charge against the officer was groundless, he (Mr. S.) had offered a few words in his vindication, showing that payment in the notes of

a bank, and giving checks thereon, had been improperly confounded; that while one was illegal and the other not, the officer had done that only which was legal; that if the creditor had received any notes in payment of the check, it was a voluntary arrangement between him and the bank. In further illustration of which, he would refer to the practice which had been adopted from the necessities of the Government, produced by the infidelity of the banks, of issuing warrants, which being protested, were put forth in lieu of other modes of payment. The public officers having no mode of payment but checks on the deposit banks were not only justified, but would have been guilty of a breach of duty, had they hesitated in giving these checks, and when given, it was for the creditor either to receive payment from the banks in what they might offer, or protest them, and look to the Government. Upon the other branch of the subject, Mr. S. had endeavored to show that the facts disclosed by the Senator from Massachusetts, instead of proving the necessity of a United States Bank, showed fully that nothing could render us just as debtors, and free us from corruption in our fiscal administration, but a total disconnection with all banks, and the receipt and disbursement of our revenue in gold and silver.

The Cherokees.—Messrs. Kennedy and Wilson, United States Commissioners, and Col. Smith, Superintendent of Cherokee Removal, have issued an address to the Chiefs, Headmen, and people of the Cherokee Nation. This comes to us in the form of an Extra, from the office of the Athens Courier. The object of this address is to disabuse the minds of the Cherokees, of the misrepresentations made to them by the Cherokee Delegation at Washington and by Mr. Ross; and to assure them that the treaty will be enforced—for such is the unalterable determination of the government of the United States. Ross had led these deluded people to believe, that he would get back for them so much of the Cherokee country as is situated in the States of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama, and that they would be required to give up such lands only as are within the State of Georgia. But the matter is so clearly explained to them by the Agents above mentioned, that there can be no mistake. They must remove before the 25th of May, 1838, or be driven by force from the country.—*Ral. Standard.*

A base attempt was made to destroy or greatly injure the printing office of the Elizabeth City Phoenix, in the early part of the present month. The editor says the attempt was made by putting a piece of wood in the stove, filled with nearly a pound of gunpowder. The publication of the Phoenix was suspended for one week, on account of the injury the office sustained by this atrocious contrivance. Fortunately, no person was in the office at the time of the explosion.—*ib.*

State Sovereignty.—Two citizens of the State of Maine have been accused, in Georgia, of the felonious abduction of a Slave from that State. The Legislature of Georgia, after stating the refusal of the Governor of Maine to deliver up the accused, have resolved *unanimously*, that after a bill of indictment has been found, a second demand shall be made, agreeably to the Constitution of the United States—that if the Executive of Maine refuses again to comply, the Governor of Georgia shall transmit a copy of the Resolutions to the Legislatures of all the States, to the President, and to the Senators and Representatives in Congress, from Georgia, to be laid before that body. If the Legislature of Maine, at the next session after, neglect to redress the grievances complained of, it shall be "the duty of the Executive of Georgia to pronounce the same by Proclamation, and call upon the people to elect under like restrictions and regulations as in the election of members of the Legislature, a number of delegates equal to the number of Senators and Representatives to which they are entitled in the General Assembly, to meet in Convention, on a day to be fixed in said Proclamation at the seat of Government, to take into consideration, the state of the Commonwealth of Georgia, and to devise the course of her future policy, and provide all necessary safeguards for the protection of the rights of her people."—*Ral. Reg.*

Steam Dredging Machine.—An intelligent and esteemed friend has kindly supplied us with a statement, showing the results of an experiment which has been made with one of the two Steam Dredging Boats built for the purpose of deepening Ocracoke to Core Sound, on the Coast of North Carolina, the launching of which

was noticed in the American a short time since. In the trial which has been made, the dredging apparatus was fixed on one side only, consequently it will be proper in estimating the extent of effect of which the boat is capable, to double the amount actually performed. The buckets used on the occasion referred to contain six cubic feet each, and the dredging was done in first instance, in a depth of thirteen feet, and afterwards in six feet water. In each case eight buckets were filled and discharged in a minute, thus excavating forty-eight cubic feet within that short space of time, or at very nearly the rate of one hundred and seven cubic yards per hour. Of course it is fair to anticipate that when in full operation, with both sides at work, the machine will excavate more than two hundred cubic yards of mud or sand per hour. The engine, which is thirty eight horse power, and also the entire machinery for the dredging part were constructed by our enterprising fellow citizens, Messrs. Watchman and Bratt, whose reputation in their business has been too long and too well established to require any eulogism at our hands. Independently of the gratification attendant on complete success, we feel additional pleasure in knowing that the ingenuity and excellent workmanship of Baltimore mechanics will in the present, as they have been in many previous instances, become the subjects of remark in a distant part of the Union, and that our steam boats have become the admiration of all beholders, so will the useful machinery of which we have here spoken, confer upon workmen the credit they so justly merit.—*Balt. Amr.*

Specie Payments.—The Bank of Albany, and the Commercial Bank of that city, having announced their resumption of specie payments, all of the Albany Banks have now resumed the redemption of their notes in specie.—*N. Y. Star.*

Remarkable Phenomenon.—The Hempstead, (Long Island) Inquirer, of the 13th, gives an almost supernatural narration of the corpse of a young lady which was exhumed a few days since in that village for re-interment in another spot. The coffin was in a good state of preservation—and on examination of the corpse, which yet presented its original shape, there were found to be growing from its surface a vegetable substance, in the shape of filaments of grass, but of a whitish color, with a small bud on the end of each one. These spires of grass had risen from various parts of the face, the forehead, upper lips, and cheeks. Several were plucked, and are now in the possession of the gentleman who informed us of this remarkable fact, and who has promised us an inspection of them.

It is well known that in all dry, gravelly soils like that of Hempstead plains, the body undergoes little or no decomposition even after the lapse of centuries. Under the tower of the church of St. Michael, at Bordeaux, (the famous grave or gravelly country which raises the choice wines,) bodies are shown that are dried into mummies, and are several hundred years old—their features, expression, &c. still remaining. The same, we believe, exists in a church at Palermo, as described so graphically in one of N. P. Willis' letters. In the above case, however, the fluids of the body appear to have been preserved, and to have afforded nutriment to the visible germs of some of those *cryptogamous* plants whose propagation is but little understood.—*ib.*

Something New.—The robbers in New Orleans have invented a new method of effecting their object. It consists in passing a cord across the street on a dark night, waiting gently till some wayfarer approaches, tripping him up dexterously, and then under pretext of helping him on his feet, make way with every valuable he has about him.—*ib.*

Mysterious Affair.—On Saturday night last, (the 9th inst.) at 10 o'clock, a stranger on horseback, called at the Central House in the borough of North East, in this county, and inquired for the residences of two brothers, Doctors James and Ephraim Smedley. After received directions from the landlord, he proceeded in the direction of their houses, and after being gone fifteen or twenty minutes, long enough to have found them and had an interview with their proprietors—he was seen to ride back past the Central House towards the West. He was gone in this direction long enough to have ridden perhaps a quarter of a mile and back, when he returned accompanied by another person on horseback, and followed by the carriage and horses of a prominent citizen of this county, now, we believe, President of the Erie county Abolition Society. The curtains

of the carriage were fastened down close all around, a man driving upon the outside. The whole circumstances naturally exciting some curiosity, one or two citizens who happened to be in the Central House, followed the carriage down street, when it was driven into the backyard of Doct. James Smedley, and six blacks were unloaded—one negro man, two wenches, and three negro boys. The negro was a very large and athletic man. The Drs. Smedley were then seen to hurry and call the Rev. Mr. Adair, pastor of the Presbyterian church, Capt. Truman Tuttle, and a number of other citizens, who were seen hurrying from all directions, to the house of Dr. Jas. Smedley. The horses were soon changed in the carriage. The Rev. Mr. Adair was seen to bring one or two horses on the ground, and a number of other horses were brought from different quarters. Several persons gathered around the carriage armed with clubs, and thus surrounded, with six or eight men on horseback, surrounding the carriage, the whole moved off to the East—with the blacks included in the carriage as before.

Little more is known of, or concerning the transaction, except that it was stated by one of the parties most actively engaged, that the blacks were runaway slaves from Richmond, Virginia, and that they were riding in their escape.

Eric (Pa) Observer.

From the Louisville Ky. Journal, Jan. 6.

Horrible Tragedy.—Yesterday, at about half past 2 o'clock, P. M., Mr. H. S. Julian, the Treasurer of the Mechanics' Savings Institution, on returning from his dinner, found the door of the Banking house fastened. He soon succeeded in forcing it, and, on entering, saw Captain Clarendon E. Dix standing before him with the cancelling hammer of the Bank in his hand. Dix instantly rushed upon Julian and struck him two or three times on the head with the hammer, but the latter wrenched the instrument from his hand and rushed out of the door, and immediately afterwards, heard the report of a pistol.

The alarm was of course given, and several citizens entered the Bank, and found that Dix had shot himself through the head, after having, prior to the entrance of Julian, murdered the Clerk, Mr. Owen Parker, by striking him on the head with the hammer and crushed in a dreadful manner, the whole of one side of his skull. Parker was struggling in the last agonies of death when he was discovered. We saw Dix at about 4 o'clock yesterday, when he was still breathing, but he died about an hour afterwards. Several quarts of blood had streamed from the dead and the dying. Mr. Julian's wounds, it is feared are dangerous, but strong hopes are entertained that they are not so.

The money-drawer of the Bank was found open, and there is little doubt, that Capt. Dix entered the Bank for the purpose of committing robbery. He had lived in this city for several years, and has generally been esteemed a respectable young gentleman, although we are informed that suspicion attached to him two or three years ago in the affair of the robbery on board the steamboat Philadelphia. He was recently married, and has a highly respectable mother living in Wheeling. Mr. Parker, his victim, was a gentleman of high standing in this city, and has left a wife and several small children. Dix and Parker had been regarded as intimate friends.

The Red River.—The New Orleans Bulletin of the 6th has the following:

Shreveport, Dec. 24.

"Capt. Shreve's snag-boat passed here a few days since, for the purpose of removing the remainder of the Great Red River Raft, which it is supposed will be accomplished in some few weeks. We will then have an uninterrupted navigation above this town, on the Red River, of 1500 miles—on the Sulphur Fork, 200—on Little River, 200—on the Blue River, 150—on the False Washita, 300, making 2300 miles of navigable waters above this place, though, probably, the finest country in the globe. The immigration to the country in the vicinity of this town is enormous, so much so, that provisions of all descriptions command excessive prices, and were it not for supplies, brought by the boats running in the trade between this and Natchez, much inconvenience would be experienced by the movers. Corn sells at two and half dollars the bushel, and many flat boat loads have been contracted for, from above, at that price.

"Persons moving up from New Orleans, would do well to lay in their supplies below, for notwithstanding the large crops here, the country is not a quarter supplied."