

TERMS OF THE "AMERICAN."

H. B. MASSER, PUBLISHERS AND JOSEPH EISELY, PROPRIETORS.

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AND SHAMOKIN JOURNAL.

Absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of Republics, from which there is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism.—JEFFERSON.

By Masser & Eiseley.

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TO EMMA.

DR M A, would that I might C
U smile as once B A,
And bid my troubles B
E Z and calm once more.

RIPE FRUIT AND DYSENTERY.—There is a pernicious prejudice with which people are too generally imbued: It is that fruits are injurious in the dysentery—that they produce and increase it.

THE OSSIFIED MAN OF DUBLIN.—A writer in the Christian Advocate, under the head of "Transatlantic Recollections," speaking of the Museum at Dublin remarks:—"What calls and rivets the attention of every stranger, whether scientific or otherwise, is the celebrated skeleton of an ossified man; it is said to be the only instance of entire ossification ever known."

The Amarcronic muse does not slumber with Moore, nor did the pathetic die with Byron, for a western poet has given the following to posterity:
When Peggy's dog her arms imprison,
I often wish my lot was hissen.

From the Philadelphia Dollar Newspaper. A Graphic Sketch of the late Disastrous Flood in the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers—Immense Loss of Property—Shock of an Earthquake.

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo., July 24, 1844.
MESSRS. EDITORS:—The mighty Mississippi, the Missouri, or the Missourian, (for we want a name, to distinguish the main stream from mountain to ocean,) unsurpassed in its course, unlimited in its resources, gathering waters from every quarter, stretching out in its tributaries from east to west, invading the very verge of the great lakes in bibulous ambition; though it rolls on for the most part in unassuming repose, now and then merely lifting up its head to cast a glance at advancing cultivation, yet there are times when it seems determined to assert its supremacy, its undivided sway, and utter awful warnings of its overwhelming power.

Through the whole of the country west of Mississippi, ruin has been more than abundant since the first of April, but the river was not much affected by it till about the middle of May. The volume of water which it has poured down since that time is truly astonishing. This great rise appeared to be declining about the beginning of June, and the river seemed to be returning, though slowly, to its bed. It was imagined by many that this first rise was the usual annual elevation of the waters, and that it contained the mountain freshets and the melting of the snows.

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earthquakes, some convulsion of that kind may have opened the rocks at what is called the Grand Chain, and, perhaps, before that time, the river flowed down through the abovementioned swamp, which is only a short distance above the Grand Chain. However that may be, a complete river, some miles broad, at present exists between Scott and Cape Girardeau counties fourteen and fifteen feet deep in parts, and to cross which a boat has been built on the spot, capable of conveying horses, cattle, &c. over.

Terrible disasters have affected the stock; they are drowned out utterly in many places; and where the bluffs are in sight it has been better, for at the foot of the bluffs the bottom lands often decline, and thus become flooded, and cut off all access except by boats. Sometimes a hill appears and all congregate to the spot, men, women, children, horses, sheep, hogs and steers, looking around with anxiety on the wild expanse of water. The horses neigh, cows low, and sheep bleat their full voiced alarm, and look instinctively to man for a rescue. In the meantime drift logs come floating by, and sometimes hogs mounted on them, holding on tenaciously and making the most of their nautical knowledge. Houses come past, sometimes twenty per day, some mere logs, some respectable. The Mary Tompkins steamer, off the Missouri, in one part of her trip, could get no wood but what she picked up, and that was not enough to keep her going.

The Belle Air, at Chester, struck a sunken house, or partly sunk, upset it, and on shearing around struck a stone mill, knocked off a corner, but carried away her cook house, forward guard and steam connecting pipe. Kaskaskia has been quite submerged; the Nuns (Sisters of Charity) carried to St. Louis, and the Republican office and press gone down somewhere near Davy's Locker. All the river towns have suffered more or less; some may be said to be entirely ruined. At Lexington, an acre of land, with five houses on it, slid into the river, and of Nashville, only seven houses are left. This flood has indeed surpassed the great flood of 1785, called by the French "the year of the great waters," (l'annee des grandes eaux.) The committee appointed have estimated the damage in Howard county alone, a small county, at \$100,000; 45,000 acres of land were covered by the fresh, and in many places overlaid with sand and mud ten and twelve feet deep. And this is only one county of thirty or forty. There is some talk of applying to Congress for new lands, as was the case after the New Madrid earthquake of 1812; and it is suggested that the States of Missouri and Illinois remit taxes on property so injured, for two or three years. Many lives have been lost, of which nothing will be heard, as the settlers live apart here, and in a manner so solitary that would surprise the resident of a city or its environs. In one instance, three men were taken off of two horses, after being three days in the water, and up to their arm pits when relieved; two men were also taken from a tree top, where they had been twenty-four hours. Hundreds of families are encamped on the bluffs, where bluffs are to be found; but a few miles south of Cape Girardeau City every thing is dead flat on both sides of the river. Cape Girardeau City is the only landing on the river which comes to the water's edge, that has not seriously suffered; but the Cape, as is familiarly called, rises fast from the river, and is luckily set between ridges of rocks, so that it is not like so many localities on these waters, which are flourishing to-day and swept away to-morrow. Commerce, a small village landing in Scott county, defended by a bold ridge of rocks, has also a lucky position, ("barring the bar," as the Irish would say,) and has only been inconvenienced by the removal of the goods in one store and one warehouse. But, alas! the prairies and bottoms below. But it is no pleasant picture. Let us lament in silence. And now the cry is, as the river is declining, what a terrible time of sickness we shall have.

Yours, respectfully,
DOWLES.

P. S.—We have just had a slight earthquake, half past 3, P. M., 19th July. It was a mere vibration, which rocked the house, apparently from S. W. to N. E., and was more amusing than alarming.

SMART BOY.—A negro boy being sent by his master to borrow a pound of lard from a neighbor, thus delivered his message:—"Missus Thompson massa sent me over to borrow or beg a pound of hog tallow; he say he got de old sow up in de pen, fatten 'em; he gwine to kill her day before yesterday, and he come over week fore last, and pay you all you owe us."

A good book and a good woman are excellent things to those who know how to justly appreciate their value; but there are many who judge of both only by their covering.

The Emperor and the Comedian. AN HISTORICAL ANECDOTE.

Many monarchs have delighted in an extravagant and startling exhibition of power, but the Russian despots, perhaps, more frequently than others have been in the habit of blending dramatic contrivances both with vengeance and playfulness.

The emperor Paul was a strange, half-mad personage; he honored with his favor many humble persons, and among the number, one Frogere, a French player, who had the honor of occasionally dining at the imperial table, where sometimes his sallies were held to be brilliant. One day a compliment was paid to the emperor which went to exalt him above his ancestor Peter the Great. The emperor affected modesty, but at the same time attempted a witticism, remarking that so to flatter him was "robbing Peter to pay Paul;" and appealed to Frogere if that were fair. The player, for the sake of a joke rather than the truth, instantly admitted that it was not, "as there was no probability that ever any one would be able to rob Paul to pay Peter." This did not please; there was too much sarcastic truth in it to pass current in that society. Every one looked blank; the party broke up before the gloom had passed away, and Frogere, much disconcerted, retreated to his bed, and tried to forget the mishap in sleep. That night his chamber was abruptly entered by an officer and four armed men, and the emperor's warrant for his arrest was produced. It was announced that he was banished to Siberia, and must forthwith commence his sad journey. He was merely allowed time to procure himself with a change of clothes, when he was forced into a carriage, which, strongly guarded, moved forward, two soldiers with pistols and a drawn sword being his companions in the vehicle. They advanced briskly during the night, and when day returned the actor was blindfolded.

A stop was at length made; he was removed from the coach, and the bandage being taken from his eyes he found himself in a wretched hovel. Coarse food was set before him, while an officer with whom he had formerly been on intimate terms, looked on in cold forbidding silence.

Frogere was too much afflicted to eat.—"What have I done," he exclaimed, "to merit this severity?"

"Need you be told?" inquired the officer; "have you forgotten the mad insult you ventured to offer the Emperor of all the Russias at his own table! So outrageous a sarcasm his imperial majesty could not forgive."

"Heaven is my witness," said Frogere, "I meant no offence. Can you not make this known I cannot you interfere for me?"

"Impossible! all I can do is to take care of your property at Moscow. Any other commission that you may give me I will faithfully execute."

"And am I to be banished for life?"

"No; the kindness of the emperor for you forbids him to go so far; you are only to remain in Siberia thirty years!"

"Thirty years!" Frogere exclaimed with horror. In that mournful hour the vast difference between banishment for life and "only for thirty years" was hardly appreciated.

The officer took his leave; Frogere was again blinded, and the carriage pursued its journey. At intervals it stopped, a scanty meal was set before the prisoner. How long they had been travelling he could not tell, but he concluded they had reached the confines, when blinded with more care than ever, he found the upper part of his dress loosened, his arms pinioned, and in this situation he was placed on a seat. He heard the jarring sound of muskets, and the military word of command, and remonstrated his soul to heaven. Another movement was made, which told him the fatal moment was at hand, when the bandage fell from his eyes, and he found himself in the same place which he had filled when he hazarded that jocular remark which had caused him to experience so much affliction. The emperor presided, and all present laughed delighted with the imperial prank, for such it was, which had drawn the object of it half a dozen miles round the palace under the circumstances described,—some four-and-twenty hours. The poor Frogere the change was too violent; he fainted in the moment when his safety was announced, and did not immediately revive to receive the congratulations of those courtiers who could admire such a fearful experiment on the actor's feelings as had been made by the then potent despot, the miserable emperor Paul.

Another still more remarkable scene was shortly afterwards got up in the same place. The emperor joyously supped with the performer and a select company. When the entertainment ended, Frogere and those who remained to the last, withdrew to the chambers in the palace. An alarm was suddenly given, all arose, and sought the emperor's apartment. They entered them, and found the cause of their disturbance was more than a joke, as extended on the floor lay the corpse of the despot.

JOHN JACOB ASTOR.

John Jacob Astor, the son of a bailiff, was born in the small village of Waldorf, near Heidleberg, in the grand duchy of Baden, in the year 1763. In March, 1784, he landed at Baltimore, having sailed from London in the preceding November, and been detained three months by the ice in Chesapeake Bay.

"It is said that in a storm off our coast, which threatened the destruction of the ship and crew, while the other passengers were lost in apprehension, and regardless of aught save self-preservation, Mr. Astor appeared upon deck, arrayed in his best clothes. This excited some surprise, and when asked his object in discarding the more appropriate garb he had worn during the voyage, he replied—"that if he escaped with his life it would be with his best clothes, and if he perished no matter what became of them." Luckily the storm passed over.

During his detention in the Chesapeake, he made the acquaintance of a countryman of his, a furrier by trade, who willingly initiated him into the mysteries of his craft, and counselled him to invest the proceeds of his merchandise—a portion of which consisted of musical instruments from a brother's manufactory in London—in furs. Mr. Astor was then twenty years of age, and having decided to become a furrier, brought to his new pursuit all the activity of youth, with those habits of diligent observation which had developed themselves in his character.

This was at the close of the revolutionary war. Peace had been proclaimed with Great Britain the year previous; but the British military outposts within our territory had not been relinquished, and the commercial intercourse with Canada was restricted. Mr. Astor has been heard to observe that, at the time, he prophesied that ten years would elapse before Oswego, Niagara, Detroit, Michilimackinac and other posts within our lines, would be relinquished; and said to himself, "then when the frontiers are surrendered, I will make my fortune in the fur trade."

Both predictions were accomplished. The treaty with Great Britain, of 1794-5, removed restrictions on our trade with her colonies, and surrendered the above outposts, and then Mr. Astor, having the trade with the Canadas and with our western country, both open to his enterprise, proceeded rapidly to realize the fortune, the foundation of which was laid in more than ten years of thrift and patient industry.

By the first year of the present century, he had amassed something like \$250,000. Forty years have since elapsed. By the natural course of accumulation, this sum would have amounted, at the end of such a period, to nearly \$6,000,000; but, in Mr. Astor's hands, it has increased to nearly four times that amount, for we should be moderate in estimating his actual wealth at \$20,000,000. In 1800 the man of thirty-seven could look back with satisfaction upon the career of the boy of eighteen, who, under the shade of a linden-tree, near his native village, had resolved, on the eve of leaving his home for a foreign land, to be honest and industrious and never to gamble."

In 1809 he founded the American fur company, but, soon dissatisfied with even the large profits derived from that concern, he conceived the idea of founding a permanent settlement on the Pacific, connected with the settled portions of the country by a series of trading posts, and by these means to monopolize the fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains within the precincts of the United States. The provisions, goods, and ammunition of the Pacific settlement were to be supplied by a vessel sent annually from New York. The same vessel was also to convey supplies to the Russian establishments in the north, and receive furs in exchange. With these latter and those amassed at the settlement during the year, she was to proceed to Canton, and invest the proceeds of her cargo in silks, teas and nankeens. Accordingly in 1810, a party of 60 men started from New York for Oregon, and in September of the same year, the Tonquin was despatched on the same errand. This vessel and one or two subsequent ones were lost—the colonists were exposed to every trial and suffering—and, during the war of 1812, the settlement, unprotected by the Government of the United States, and threatened by a British man of war, was treacherously sold, by one of Mr. Astor's partners to the northwest fur company.

Thus ended a grand and well contrived enterprise, after so great an outlay and loss as would have annihilated most American fortunes. About \$1,000,000 were expended in the carrying out of plans which were entirely frustrated, and which were in progress at the same time that the American fur company was in full operation, when the ships of the projector were in every sea, and his cargoes in every principal city of our country.

"As an instance of the magnitude of the views of Mr. Astor, it is stated that, had his agents succeeded in effecting a permanent settlement at Astoria, he anticipated that the es-

tablishment would prove a bill of costs during the first two years, and would not begin to afford very profitable returns before the expiration of the second decade. During the third decade, it would have netted him something like \$1,000,000 per annum. If we esteem him an enterprising merchant who awaits, for a year the return of his vessel from Canton or the Pacific, what term shall we apply to the adventurous and self-relying spirit, which, regardless of the "changes and chances of this mortal life," organizes and executes a vast and costly project, destined only to mature at the expiration of ten years?"

One of the greatest sources of Mr. Astor's wealth, however, has been the natural rise of real estate in New York. At one period he invested two-thirds of his annual gains in land, and he now possesses whole acres in the most valuable quarters of the city. And it is a singular feature in the history of one dealing so constantly, and in so large sums, and, moreover, whose entire fortune was probably, at times, on the bosom of the ocean, that he was never known to mortgage a lot. Mr. Astor has always been an early riser, but has devoted fewer hours, perhaps, to his counting room than most mercantile men. He generally left business at two o'clock in the afternoon, although it is to be presumed that his mind was always engaged in the acquisition of that vast fortune which has been heaped together by his own exertions alone, and amid many and great obstacles.—Balt. American.

A YANKEE SHOEMAKER.

"You hain't no occasion for a pair nor nothing, I spose," said a jolly son of St. Crispin from the land of wooden nutmegs, as he entered a shoe establishment, with his kit nicely done up in his apron.

"Wonder if I hain't," was the reply of the boss.

"Why, I should like a dozen if I could get 'em—but what kind of a shoe can you make?"

"—as to the matter o' that," said the shoemaker, "reckon how I can make a decent sort of a craft."

"Spread your kit then," said the boss. "I'll give you a pair to try, and if your work suits me, I can give you a steady set of work." Crispin was soon hammering and whistling away as happy as a clam at high water, and the boss was called away on some business which detained him two or three hours—meanwhile the tampering jour had produced a thing which bore some faint resemblance to a shoe, and feeling somewhat ashamed of it, hid it in a pile of leather chips that lay on the floor, and proceeded to make another, which he had barely time to finish, when his employer entered and began to examine it.

"Look here, mister," said he "I guess you didn't make the mate to this: it is the greatest botch that ever was made in my shop, that's a fact."

"Praps you'd like to bet a trifle on that," said the shoemaker.

"Bet," responded the boss, "why, I'll bet a ten dollar bill against a hand of tobacco, that there never was a shoe made in this shop half so bad as this!"

"Done," said Crispin, at the same time casting a sly wink at his shopmates, "but stop, let me see if I have got so much of the weed with me. Oh yes, here's a whole hand of Cavendish," and laying it out on the cutting board, he ventured to suggest the propriety of having the sacket skin laid along side of it, which was no sooner done, than he proceeded to draw from its hiding place the other shoe.

"Here boss," said he, "you must decide the bet; my which of the two shoes is the worst." "Well, I guess I'm fairly sucked in this time," replied the boss, nodding the Cavendish and replaster towards the rightful owner, and throwing a ninny-pence to the youngest apprentice. The boy nosed no farther instruction as to his duty, but was off in the twinkling of a bed-post, and soon returned with a quart of blackstrap, with which all hands regaled themselves.

After all had drank, and Crispin had pocketed the money, he turned to the boss and said, "Now boss, I'll bet ten dollars that I can make a better shoe than any other jour in the shop—Praps you'd like the ten dollars back—will you take the bet?"

"To be sure I will," the boss replied, producing another N, and laying it on the lap stone, the Yankee putting his with it. Crispin was again soon at work, and made a shoe which the boss was forced to acknowledge couldn't be beat, and the Yankee coolly stowed away the blunt. The boss, however, consoled himself with the idea, that he had got a first rate workman, if he was a wag, and told him to go on and make a mate to the shoe, when the shrewd Yankee, being well satisfied with his day's work significantly replied, "Let some of your jokers make a mate to it if they can," and putting his sticks together, and bidding the boss a hearty good bye, again started on a tramp.