For the REPUBLICAN
A. Clearfield, Pa., by D. W. MOORE
Editor and Proprietor, at the fol-

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Clearfield Republican.

A WEEKLY PAPER: DEVOTED TO LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, MORALITY, AND FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

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From the San Francisco Whig, April 1.

BURNING OF THE INDEPENDENCE.

We published yesterday an account of the loss of the Vanderbilt steamship Independence, Captain Sampson, on a sunken reef a few miles from Margarita Island, north of Cape St. Lucas. That account, though giving the most important facts connected with this dreadful affair, did not set forth the particulars. We have been introduced to Doctor J. B. Torbett, surgeon of the Independence, who, in an hour's conversation, has put us in possession of a mass of information, a portion of which we give below.

The island upon which the ill-fated steamer was wrecked, is situated on the coast of Lower California, 167 miles north of the point known as the "Cape" St. Lucas. The coast in this region, bold and rock-bound, in many places inaccessible for vessels or boats, and presents an iron barrier to the luckless ship coasting its rocky projections.

The steamer was going under a fine head of steam on the 16th of February, when, at daybreak, though before the light was perfectly clear, she suddenly struck and was stopped. The land could be seen towards the coast, but very indistinctly.—At the moment the vessel struck, an indescribable scene of confusion occured on board. A rush was made by the passengers to the various hatchways, and the upper deck was soon entirely crowded with human beings. Capt. Sampson was on the wheel-house, and at once ordered the engineer to back her, which was done, the steamer backing off with apparent ease.

As soon as the vessel was backed into deep water, Capt. Sampson gave secret orders that the pumps should be sounded, when it was discovered that there were eight feet of water in the hold. It was of importance that this alarming fact should be kept from the passengers, to prevent confusion while instant measures were adopted to beach the ship at the nearest available spot. The news, however, quickly flew from mouth to mouth, and then ensued a scene of which no idea can be given, save to those who have been similarly situated. Here was the population of a small town, with many women and children, death staring them in the face, with no visible means of succor at hand. A rush was at once made for the most valuable articles of private property. Many were thus trampled and bruised. But it was soon found that the ship could be kept afloat, and her head was pointed up the coast with the intention of beaching her in some convenient and safe place. To facilitate this, an immense amount of dry wood was heaped into the furnaces, and a heavy head of steam kept up. Our informant thinks that they must have run up the coast nearly five miles before a suitable place was found. During this time quiet had been somewhat restored on board, and the greatest anxiety was manifested in the progress of the vessel. Daylight had now dawned, and they found themselves running along a rock-bound coast, surmounted by stupendous mountains, entirely destitute of verdure and apparently uninhabited.

At length a large gully or ravine was discovered, which appeared to make out into a sand beach, and into this nook the bows of the steamer were turned. The crowd was so great around the stern, to avoid the anticipated danger of the concussion, that the helmsman could with difficulty steer the ship. She was, however, beached handsomely, and with considerable force. Had this been the only danger, there is no doubt that every soul on board would have been saved; but, in the exertions to get up steam to hurry the vessel's progress, a tremendous heat had been made in the furnaces; the water, now fast increasing in the vessel's hold, stopped the flues and obstructed the drought into the chimneys; the furnace doors were, of course, burst open, and a vivid volume of flame twenty feet in length shot into the fireroom, driving everybody before it with the intense heat, and instantly setting the woodwork into a blaze. All efforts to control the flames were utterly ineffectual, and from this moment the fire ran rapidly over the vessel. But, in describing the origin of the fire, we have gone beyond the story of our informant.

When the steamer was beached with her bows on, and before the flames had broke out a rush was made off the bows, but the sea though smooth off the shore ran in heavy surf on the beach, and there was a distance of some three hundred yards between the vessel and the land. Capt. Sampson now gave the order to lower away a boat, and the chief mate with one other undertook to carry a line to the shore; the progress of the boat was watched with eager eyes by the assembled multitude on board the ship; but as some of the sailors on board had predicted, she was swamped by the surf, the line was lost, and the venturers with their boat were thrown upon the beach, two men barely escaping with their lives. A second boat was now lowered and manned by volunteers from among the firemen, who we do not hesitate to say have shown themselves the most noble-hearted and heroic of men by their fortitude and courage through the terrible scenes which followed. These brave fellows reached the shore, and succeeded in making a small three inch hauling line fast to a projecting rock, which was at once hauled taut by those on board. The precise object of this line we do not perceive, as it seems that immediate use was not made of it, and a third boat was lowered by order of the Captain. This boat was put in charge of Capt. Steel, an experienced shipmaster, who was a passenger on board.

During this time the ship remained immoveable, the surf striking her in the stern, and perhaps tending to set her further into the sand. The third boat having been lowered, it was found that she was half full of water, and of no service unless bailed out, and Dr. Corbett sprang into her for that purpose; this effected, six ladies were passed down into the boat, among whom were Miss Conway, Mrs. Haley, Mrs. Seymour and Mrs. Coots; there were two other ladies whose names we have not learned; the boat rode the first breaker, but was filled and swamped by the second, and those already on shore rushed in to the rescue of the ladies and dragged them on to the beach. Dr. Corbett was in this boat, and gaining the shore, turned towards the ship at the cries of terror proceeding from her and beheld the quarter deck enveloped in flames.

And now ensued one of the most harrowing scenes ever recorded in the history of shipwreck; the flames leaped rapidly across the after part of the ship, driving the masses before it, and dozens sprang into the water and were seen struggling in the surf. All the boats were now gone, and it was impossible to regain the ship from the shore or to render any succor whatever; dreadful cries and screams proceeded from the ship, which, mingled with the roaring of the sea, the crackling of the flames and shouting of those on shore, who could only gaze helplessly on the sight, must have been an era of terror in the lives of those who beheld it from the beach.—As the flames advanced forward, the unhappy victims were forced into the sea, and every surf came freighted with corpses or exhausted half drowned men, women and children. Such a scene has never before been witnessed on the Pacific coast. To add to the excitement, the flames had now communicated to the powder magazine, which exploded, tearing the run and stern to pieces, and splintering all that portion of the ship; the two guns surrounded by the flames, also sent their solemn booming over the scene.

Those who were fortunate enough to get within reach of their friends on shore, were dragged half dead out of the reach of the surf, while others were swept around the stern of the steamer or out to sea, there being a strong current making seaward from the ship. At one moment not less than thirty corpses and bodies of the dying were in the edge of the surf, some of them divested of clothing. Out of a party of eighteen Jews who were on board, sixteen perished from the weight of coin, it was supposed, which they attempted to bring with them through the waves. The outward current, above mentioned, carried off numbers of persons who were good swimmers or floated, who would otherwise have been saved; several women, thus floating, were swept away; the baggage, such as would float, also went out with the ebb; none of it was saved by drifting to the shore.

We have spoken above of the manly conduct of the sailors, firemen, and coal passers. Some of these noble fellows, disregarding their own danger, seized little children in their arms, or lashed them to themselves. We have no space or heart to insert the numerous affecting instances of courage and self-sacrifice of which we have received accounts. Among them, most conspicuous is that of Mr. Tarr, of Sacramento, who lost his life in attempting to save a son of Mr. Watson; they came ashore together, both drowned. One of the firemen, whose name we did not learn, brought on shore two children, whose parents were both drowned. Another fireman brought a beautiful boy ashore to his mother, who had just been washed to the beach; her husband and two children were drowned, and she supposed the child had shared the same fate. The meeting may be imagined.

The purser of the ship, Mr. Jas. Freeborn, remained upon the deck until driven off by the fire, when springing overboard, he clung to a floating spar and was washed ashore insensible; he was resuscitated, but barely escaped with his life, being attacked with a violent fever. There is one fireman, known as Tom Sawyer, a wild, reckless scamp, but whose faults, be they what they may, should henceforth be forgotten; this brave fellow, entirely stripped, went to and from the wreck four times; he is only nineteen years of age. After the third time, and when nearly exhausted with his exertions, he learned that the chief engineer, Mr. Collins, was unable to swim, and likely to drown. He immediately started off again through the surf with a life-preserver, fastened it around the helpless man, and accompanied him to the beach; he was also instrumental in saving the lives of several others. Most of those ashore were too much exhausted to render assistance to those beating about the surf. People ran about the beach perfectly frantic; one party attempted to launch a boat to reach the steamer, but it was overwhelmed by the surf, and this action intimidated others so that it was impossible to muster the requisite force to launch a second. Meanwhile the ship had become a living mass of fire; the heat was intense, even on the shore, and every moment the beach received new accessions to the list of dead and dying. The scene was truly harrowing, and when at last the steamer was a charred and smoking hulk, her stern lifted, and she swung heavily round and went up broadside on the beach.

Some few provisions were saved from the wreck, such as salt beef, pork, molasses, vinegar, a few tin cans of preserved meats, and some cheese, but no water, nor was there a drop of water on the island, which we have before observed was utterly barren and uninhabited. The usual amount of suffering, particularly among the women and children, was experienced. During the first day, attempts were made by the survivors, after burying the dead, to procure water by condensing steam, but the experiment failed. There were now some two hundred and seventy souls congregated on the beach, and they all went without tasting water for fifty-six hours; the salt provisions only aggravated their sufferings. Shortly after the scene we have described above, a party started for the neighboring mountains, and on reaching their summit, they were enabled to descry Magdalena bay on the main land opposite, from which the island of Margarita is removed some fifteen miles; here they espied four ships at anchor; they proved to be whalers, busily engaged in trying out oil, while beyond in the vast panorama they discovered several small boats in full chase after a whale, for Magdalena bay is resorted to by whales in the winter season. Observing this the party descended to the wreck, and the chief mate, the engineers, and a few of the others, slung one of the cannons of the Independence, dragged and lugged it with great toil to the top of the hill, and with what little powder they had, fired twice, to attract the attention of the whalers; the boats in their pursuit of the whale had insensibly neared the eastern shore of the island, and were attracted by the discharge, and the smoke against the clear sky. The sound was also heard by those on board the ships, and signals were observed to go up to each masthead recalling the boats.

While this system of telegraphing was going on between the shipwreck and the whaling fleet another party had taken an iron boat belonging to the steamer and carried it bodily across to the lee side of the island, and there launched it, to pull for the fleet; on their way they fell in with the returning whaling boats, who were obeying the signal to return. The news of the wreck of the steamer and the dreadful sufferings of the passengers aroused all the natural instinct of sailor hospitality in the crews of the ship. Every boat was at once called into requisition, they were loaded down with provisions, and despatched to the scene of the wreck; the assistance did not arrive a moment too soon; the women and children were completely exhausted by abstinence, and their sufferings by the deprivation of water were most acute. Purser Freeborn went on board the ship Omega, Captain Fisher, where every attention was shown him and his companions. Captain Fisher also sent directions that the sufferers should cross over to the lee-side of the island where boats would be in readiness to convey them on board the ships.

Among the incidents of the day after the wreck, a child was born on the beach, and is now healthy and thriving. The mother was carried across the mountains in a hammock, and even walked part of the way to the boats. Many of the passengers, especially among the females, suffered much from want of clothing. The dead were buried near the wreck. Holes were dug in the sand with boards, and each corpse received a seperate grave. The number known to have perished is one hundred and forty; and as the graves number sixty, there were of course eighty who were drowned or burned, and whose bodies were not recovered. We have not yet completed our list of those who were buried on the island, but noticing among the names those of Mrs. Mary Ann Cranes, of England; Otis Hale, of Massachusetts; Rufus Mosier, of Newport, New York; Mr. Chansey, San Jose, Michigan; John Baum, Newark, N. J.; Mrs. Howland and three children of Michigan, (Mrs. H. was on her way to join her husband;) Mr. Lehman, of Missouri; Morris Kemp, Maria Wilson, stewardess; Mr. Carrington and wife, (two children, both saved;) Asa Kittredge, Wakegan, Illinois; William Abram, Cornwall, England; a man, unknown, had a wife and a child near Elizabeth, Illinois; Robert Taylor, Boston; Charles A. Ward, No. 356 Broome street, New York. All of the above had money on their persons, which is in the keeping of Mr. Bringham, at the office of the Vanderbilt line. The bodies of Mr. Tarr, of Sacramento; Mr. Knox of Rhode Island; and of Senor Larco, of Valparaiso, were not recovered. The last named was a Chilan gentleman of wealth and standing in Valparaise. Finding himself driven into the waves by the flames, he turned to a few who were about him, and offered 50,000 to any person who would assist him to save his life; but in such a moment none could think of the offer. Seeng that his end was near, Senor Larco said, 'Farewell! It is only once!" and plunged into the water. He was quickly drowned.

The body of Martin O'Mera, an Irishman, was also lost; he had many friends in New Orleans. Dr. Shaw who was among the passengers, went back to Mexico by the way of La Paz and Mazatlan; he was carried out by the under-tow of the surf beyond the steamer, but eventually reached the shore by incredible exertions. When he had landed he threw himself upon the beach and wept like a child. After the Independence swung round broadside to the beach her coal took fire, and the sight will long be remembered by those who saw it. The mass of coal became thoroughly ignited, and seen through the blackened ribs of the ship it gave her the appearance of a gigantic grate of coal fire. We shall hold our columns open for communications from the passengers who may wish to make any statements concerning the affair. We sincerely trust that this dreadful occurrence will be thoroughly investigated by the public authorities, as in the case of the Lexington in 1838, and in that of the Reindeer and Henry Clay in later years. A large number of fellow-beings have been suddenly cut off from existence by the terrible agency of fire and shipwreck. Of the cause of this lamentable disaster we are not yet prepared to speak. We hope, however, that in the investigation about to be made nothing may be elicited to mar the confidence of the public in the probity of the Vanderbilt line, or the capability of Captain Sampson and his officers. The sacred trust of hundreds of lives imposed upon a shipmaster requires on his part skill and ability. It is useless for us to disguise the fact that these are questioned by the surviving passengers of this steamer. Let us condemn or uphold the character of Captain Sampson as the evidence shall dictate. In our opinion, want of honesty and the blackest corruptions are not more worthy of reprobation than a lack of those qualities which constitute the careful and experienced sea captain. The destruction of the Independence is probably one of those untoward accidents which are liable to befall the carefulest seaman.

Passengers lost,	114	
Crew lost,	15	
Total lives lost		—129
Passengers saved,	242	
Crew saved,	47	
Total persons saved,		—289
Aggregate number of persons on board the Independence.		418

AN EXPLOSION RESULTING FROM GROSS IGNORANCE.—A most singular explosion occurred yesterday in the lower section of the county, which was the result of gross ignorance. An Irishman, named Michael Foldage, keeper of the old junk shop at the southwest corner of Christian and Seventh streets, purched, a few days since, about forty pounds of damaged percussion caps, for old copper. Michael inquired of the person who sold them to him how he should get the powder out, and was told to burn it out. In the simplicity of his nature, he yesterday morning heated a large pot red hot in his house, and threw in the caps. In a few moments there was a terrible explosion. The pot was boken to pieces, and some fragments of it striking Michael, he was thrown violently to the floor, and severely wounded in the face and hands. The poor fellow scarcely knew what to make of the matter, but thought the old boy himself had got in among the caps. It is astonishing that he was not killed. A portion of his clothing was torn off, and one of his stout boots was split almost in two. He was taken to the Moyamensing House of Industry, and his wounds were dressed by Dr. Zulich, the house physician. Michael will be careful how he meddles with percussion caps hereafter.—*Phila. Daily News.*

STRONGER THAN AN ARMY WITH BANNERS.—A number of small pox patients in Oglethorpe, Georgia, made a stampede from the buildings in which they were confined by the civil authorities, and, in different stages of the fearful malady, fell upon the officers and put them all to flight. Mayor Sorrell called out the military to suppress the disturbance; they, however, made but poor resistance to their diseased opponents, flying in great confusion at their approach. At last accounts, small pox had the day, and the disorder was subsiding.

☞Spanish quarter dollars are only intrinsically worth 20 cents. Government is preparing an enormous issue of new quarter dollars. The banks will be supplied next month. The Spanish quarters will then be "called in at 20 cents."—Those old fogies who have been hoarding up Spanish coin had better put it in circulation or they will lose 20 per cent.

For the Republican.

KNOCKERISM.—BY ALVA.

Messrs. Editors:—Since my last communication, I have had an opportunity of examining deeper into the sophistical opinions, called the Spiritual communications. But I still have my doubts, whether the spirits have any thing to do with it, or not. But if there is any thing supernatural connected with it, I think it is from the regions of eternal night, from whence all infidelity, blasphemy and vain delusions come. The more I converse with the advocates of Knockerism, and the more I read their own publications, the stronger I am established in the opinion, that it is the works of Beelzebub the prince of demons. It makes no essential difference, whether electricity, is the grand agency through which the mediums operate, or whether it is through some other agency: so long as every feature of their doctrine bears the marks of the most foul, and deleterious infidelity. By saying that electricity is the agency, does not lessen the crime, while its advocates claim to be magnetised by the spirits. An individual to claim that he killed another wilfully, with a club, or a jack-knife, does not lessen the crime. I have a pamphlet laying on the table before me, entitled "Supernal Theology," which advances doctrine so repugnant to sound reason, that if it was on any other subject, would elicit more than a smile. But on a subject where the immortal soul is suspended there is no room for levity. If this evil was not gaining ground, there would be no need of so much anxiety: but it is advancing, and still getting more supporters; even in our own neighborhood it has got quite a number already. But they have got no medium yet; and probably they will not, until the Goliah of Knockerism from Unionville, comes and magnatises one for them. I desire to give you some of the views of Mr. W., the author of "Supernal Theology." And in so doing, I hope to use all the charity that the nature of the case will admit: but on some subjects a person must speak plainly.

Let it be born in mind that Mr. W. says, that "these communications, were nearly all secured through a female medium under nine years of age;" and he alleges that he believes them to be "strictly spiritual."

Mr. W. says, "there are six spheres through which we have to pass after death, before we get to heaven: and that these are all preparatory, to fit us for the joys above; and probably we may have to stay many years in each, according to our obedience, or disobedience. The spirits when they leave the earth, go to the second, third, or fourth sphere, according to the holiness and purity they possess. On going there, each spirit is conducted to his or her apartment, as the case may be"—for it must be remembered that there is a "distinction of sex there, the same as on earth. And people are born in pairs on the earth, male and female, and if they are not married here, they will be united" in marriage "after they rise above the seventh sphere."

Now we would politely ask Mr. W., if people are all born in pairs, how it happens that there are more males born into the world, than there are females? This he cannot deny—and we would like to know what they do for partners in the spheres? We suppose the poor fellows, will have to live bachelors to all eternity. But let it be remembered, that the good Mr. W's. theory is diametrically opposite to the Bible. For it says, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels." So which will you believe? The knockers to be consistent, will have to believe Mr. W. And then the question is, what will they do for wives? They all appear to be great lovers of women, for their mediums are nearly all women.—"The apartment to which the spirits are conducted, are entirely empty, but they soon have them furnished to order, and fancy; and in doing this, all that is necessary is to desire it, and it is done: and if you want a harp, you have a literal one, and when you are tired of it, it dissolves away, without your laying it by." So Mr. W. says.

The spheres are laid off into streets, one is called "Swedenborg." I suppose this has been made since Swedenborg's time, for he is quite popular in the spheres.

Mr. W. says, "there is no merit whatever in belief. It is not so much as necessary for us to believe in a future state, and yet go to heaven." Hence, if belief is not necessary, we may believe or disbelieve what we please, and do as we please, and yet be happy hereafter. We may believe the Bible to be all a lie, Christ an impostor, God a monster, blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, and outrage every principle of justice and humanity, and yet be as sure of heaven as if we were there already. Mr. W. is like the most of his followers, he does not like to confess openly that he is an infidel, yet he goes so far as to say, "we need not believe every word that is in the Bible." "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." saith the eternal, the First, and the Last.

O ye wicked one! ye seducing andly spirits. How shall you escape the damnation of hell? Is the gospel, the Holy Spirit of God taught? No. Then I say with St. Paul, whether you are from earth, heaven, or hell, cursed is your doctrine, but may God have mercy on your souls.

Mr. W. says, "we go to the spheres full of error, and there Angels and the spirits of the departed instruct us, and eradicate all evil principles from our minds." The Bible says: "Christ's blood cleanseth us from all sin." But Mr. W. wants to be a little wiser than the inspired Apostle of Christ. He says, "angels cleanse us from all our errors." So our good Mr. W. rejects the Saviour altogether. His theory also makes the spirit a material substance. He says, "they have to open the doors and windows to let them in and out: and that he always leaves his chamber window open at night, so the spirits can enter, whenever they please." I wonder if our good friend Mr. W. has not lately escaped from the Lunatic Asylum: for I presume it would be a more fit place for him, than teaching Theology. Now we are middling inquisitive. We would like to know what we are to follow in the spheres. The Bible says, we are to "praise God day and night." But the wise Mr. W. says, "we spend a great part of our time in making garden. studying History, Botany, Geology, Music, dancing and playing Whist." He would make us believe that heaven is no better than a ball room, or gambling house. Horrible blasphemy! Can a fiend from the regions of eternal night, propagate a more diabolical doctrine than this? But he thinks it will not do to leave religion out altogether, so he tells us of one who went to the spheres, and "studied the theology of every sect, in order to choose a religion for himself." So I suppose his theory teaches that there will be Jew, Mehometan, Morman, Pagan, and Knockers, all worshiping as they did on earth. He also teaches us that there are "different languages spoken there, Italian, French, German, &c. But he does not tell us what language the dumb will speak, or whether any at all.

But the worst is yet to come. According to his theory, God cannot create the soul, but it is formed by education and petting.

O you farmers! lovers of animals, horses, cows, and sheep, and particularly you who love lap dogs, parrots and canary birds, do you want to take your favorite animals to the spheres? Mr. W. says, that "by petting them you can develope a soul—and then by way of enconragement he tells us of people going from earth there, and finding their favorite canary birds and spaniels there.

Horrible hallucination this! Say friends will you believe that this is the sort of a place heaven is? Will you believe that these are all the joys there are above?—Will you be advocates of a system which promulgates opinions, so full of blasphemy and so repugnant to common sense, that it makes me shudder to think of it. Think not that I misrepresent. For 25 cts. you can get 'Supernal Theology,' from Howles & Wells, No. 131, Nassau st., N. Y., and then read for yourselves.

ONE OF THE FOREMEN.—Judge W——, who still occupies an honorable distinction upon the Supreme Bench of Michigan, could, if he chose, tell some good stories from his early experience in the jurisprudence of the interior of the state. Holding his first circuit in Oakland, in 1839, a fellow was tried and convicted before him for stealing hens. The foreman of the traverse jury was one C—— T——, a laughable original wag, hitherto unknown to the Judge. The trial being over, the guilt of the prisoner manifest, and a verdict of "guilty" rendered, the Judge sentenced him to imprisonment in the county jail; soon after which the court adjourned. On the way down from the court house the Judge was overtaken by the foreman T——, a big man in a short roundabout, and a fiery red head, whom he did not, at once, recollect. "Well, Judge," said T——, slapping the Judge on the back, "you put it to that chap good and strong, and you did right, poor misserable cuss! to steal hens. Judge, I am naturally strong in the back, and when the country was new, I have now and then *taken a sheep*; but *hens*—ho Lord, he oughter feel above it."—*Detroit Adv.*

"THE GREY MARE THE BETTER HORSE."—The Bangor *Whig* relates that in the little town of Eddington there is a family consisting of six children, the mother of whom is robust, healthy and active, but the father is of quite a different character. It had been arranged that the wife should go to California, and make her "pile," while the husband should stay at home and take care of the children.—This arrangement was mutually satisfactory, and the woman obtained her outfit for the land of gold. On arriving at New York she found an opportunity to cook during the passage out, and she immediately sent back to her family fifty dollars of her funds, and has gone on her way rejoicing, and with the determination to get her share of the gold of California.

☞Never reproach a man with the faults of his relatives.