

CANADA.

A correspondent of the Albany Argus, under date of Watertown, June 13th, states—"that while the steamer Onondaga was that morning passing Wells Island (St. Lawrence) Bill Johnson with four men appeared in his long boat, constructed in such a manner, as to equal the speed of the best steamboats. He and his men gave three cheers. It was attempted to be returned on board of the steamboat, but was suppressed. Johnson then raised from his boat the flag of the Sir Robert Peel, and a second time gave three cheers, which was also attempted to be returned by some on board the steamboat, but was in a like manner suppressed. Johnson then made off in his boat towards the head of the Island. This occurred near the spot where the "Peel" was burnt.

His boat surpasses in speed all others, and he declares he will not be taken alive. McLeod and Frey, accomplices of Bill, are, it is said, at or near Lewistown, on the Niagara river.

Col. Cummings, of the U. S. army, has arrived at Watertown, and is awaiting the arrival of troops to carry into execution whatever efficient measures are necessary.

There are more than twenty prisoners in the jail at Watertown, connected with the burning of the Robert Peel, besides many on bail, and others hourly expected. They are shortly to be tried before Judge Cushman of the Circuit Court.

Latter information states, that McLeod above mentioned, has been tracked to Lockport by three officers of the U. S. government; but the "refugees of Lewiston," according to the Albany Argus, gave him notice of their approach and he escaped. The express was arrested and admitted the fact.

Wm Mckenzie, the ex-patriot, in his Gazette states that Bill Johnson is his "intimate friend," and is a native of Lower Canada, and brother in law of Col. Isaac Fraser, of Upper Canada, and previous to 1812 was a rich land owner, but was robbed by the British government of all his property. He has a large family at his residence at French Creek, and during the last war was a spy in Canada, employed by our Government. He is a second Paul Jones.

An account dated Buffalo, Sunday says, "That the patriots of Upper Canada have again made a rally on their own soil—having formed a camp in 'Long Swamp,' (an extensive marsh lying between Grand Island and Chippewa creek) where they are now fortifying themselves. The nucleus of this force was formed by refugees, who crossed over from the United States, in parties of from 20 or 30 at a time, so as to elude British vigilance; our volunteers said to be flocking in to them from all quarters.

The number entrenched when they were discovered, is supposed to be from 200 to 400. The alarm was instantly given, and an express sent off to Toronto, for a regular force to exterminate them. This news is very—but we think it may be substantially relied upon."

On the 13th inst, Governor Marcy was at Oswego, looking after the Peel pirates. A schooner laden with merchandise, belonging to Mr. Chrysler, of Niagara, Upper Canada, has been captured it is rumored, on Lake Erie. Two steamboats have been in hot pursuit of the buccaners of the Thousand Island. In the western district of the Upper Province, 400 patriots, it is said, have risen against the public authorities. Sir John Colborne had arrived at Toronto, U.C.

The following is a copy of a proclamation recently issued by the leader of the gang that destroyed the steamboat Sir Robert Peel. It was obtained for Gov. Marcy; and, if the facts may be relied on, is important, as showing that the attack, although made in the American water, was concerted in and proceeded from the British dominions.—*Albany Argus.*

"To all whom it may concern.

"I, William Johnson a natural born citizen of Upper Canada, certify that I hold a commission in the Patriot service of Upper Canada as commander in chief of the naval forces and flotilla. I commanded the expedition that captured and destroyed the steamer Sir Robert Peel. The men under my command in the expedition were nearly all natural born English subjects—the exception were volunteers for the expedition. My Head Quarters was on an Island in the St. Lawrence, without the jurisdiction of the United States, at a place named by me Fort Wallace. I am well acquainted with the boundary line, and know which of the Islands do, and which do not, belong to the United States; and in the selection of the Island I wished to be positive and not locate within the jurisdiction of the United States, and had reference to the decision of the Commissioners under the 8th article of the treaty of Ghent, done at Utica, in the State of New York, 13th June, 1822. I know the number of the Island, and by the decision it was British territory. I yet hold possession of that station, and we also occupy a station some twenty or more miles from the boundary line of the United States, in which was his Majesty's dominions until it was occupied by us. I act under orders. The object of my movements is the independence of the Canadas. I am not at war with the commerce or property of the citizens of the United States.

Signed this tenth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight.

WILLIAM JOHNSON.

BILL JOHNSON.

From the Albany Argus.

"Early in the spring a party of refugees made a lodgment on 'The Thousand Islands,' in the St. Lawrence. The leader of this gang is William Johnson, and known also as the leader in the destruction of the Sir Robert Peel. He is a Canadian by birth, is about 58 years of age, of a powerful frame, and of great fearlessness and energy of character. He has four sons, who partake, to a considerable degree, of the character of the father. He was employed as a spy in the American service during the last war; and in the course of it performed many bold and hazardous exploits. He had at his command a six-oared barge, in which he roamed the lake and the river, intercepting despatches, attacking the small craft, seizing property, and harassing the British settlement. On one occasion he intercepted despatches twice in one day at Presque Isle. On another, his boat having been driven on the British shore in a gale, and his crew captured, he eluded his pursuers for a fortnight, and finally made his escape in a bark canoe, crossing the lake (30 miles in width) alone in that frail vessel, and reached Sackett's Harbor in safety. Since the war he has resided at French Creek, in the double capacity of trader and smuggler. It is said that he boasts of having a force under his immediate command, of 150 men; but this is probably exaggeration, although he has undoubtedly more than those who were with him in the capture of the Sir Robert Peel, and could probably command, if necessary, a much greater number.

The principal rendezvous and headquarters of Johnson and his marauders, is at a fastness called Fort Wallace, on an island at the head of Wells' Island, and within the British territory. It is said to contain a fortification of much strength of position; little is known, however, in relation to it, as Johnson refuses to let any one not belonging to the gang, visit it. He boasts much of its strength, and expresses the belief that with a dozen men he could defend it against the attack of two hundred. He has a second rendezvous on Abel's Island, immediately below Wells' Island and opposite Alexandria Bay. "The Thousand Islands" are said to number about seventeen hundred, and to vary in size from the miles in length to a single rock a foot square. Wells' Island (from whence the attack was made on the Sir Robert Peel) is the largest of the group, and forms what is designated by the sailors the Upper Narrows—the passage bringing vessels within pistol shot of the island. They occupy more than twenty-five miles in the river, which in some places is more than ten miles wide. They are little else than rock, with occasional patches of fertile land. Their sides are in many parts perpendicular rocks, thirty feet in height, with abrupt shores, and great depth of water. They are generally covered with passages and thick underbrush; and the ing, and often rocky. It is narrow, and is able to conceive of a place better formed by nature to afford a secure retreat for freebooters than this cluster of islands.

Johnson has several boats, every way adapted to his designs, one of which is forty feet in length, but of so light a construction as to be easily carried across the island, and its speed is said to exceed that of the swiftest boats on the lake. Shortly after the destruction of the Sir Robert Peel, he proceeded in this boat with a few of his men up the lake, made a predatory incursion upon an island near mouth of the Bay of Quints, and plundered the inhabitants, returning on the night of the 8th inst., to the fastness of "The Thousand Islands." It is not known that he has been on the main land since the burning of the S. R. P. He has had occasional interviews with some of our citizens since that event, but they have taken place on the water. He and those that attend him on these occasions are well armed. His own appearance, with six pistols, a dirk and bowie-knife in his belt, is sufficiently belligerent; and he has with him, it is said invariably, the colors of the S. R. P. He considers the destruction of that vessel as an act of piracy, and that his life has become thereby forfeited, and says he shall sell it at the dearest rate.

Such is the character of the buccaneer of the lake; sufficient surely, with the natural and ordinary progress of exaggeration, to be a subject of alarm to the border inhabitants.—An alarm not altogether groundless, from the fact that the larger islands of this numerous group are inhabited by a lawless race of half banditti; who would scarcely scruple to join in nearly any enterprise for plunder; who have perhaps one hundred boats, and whose number has been enlarged considerably by refugee accessions. It is supposed that there are at least one thousand refugees and other persons on these islands, under the control and at the command of Johnson, and several thousands of refugees, between Niagara and Ogdensburg.

It is not to be imagined that the local militia, or the local authorities, however well disposed to cooperate with the officers of government in measures to repel and prevent these incursions and to detect and punish the marauders, are adequate to the emergency. The commerce of the river and the lake, the national character, and the lives and property of our citizens, require a government force sufficient to explore the island and expel the marauders; a considerable militia force at several points on the frontier; and the employment of an armed steam vessel or revenue cutter.

These matters, we understand, have been fully presented by Gov. MARCY to the consideration of the general government, and judging from recent movements we do not doubt that the requirements of the case will receive all the attention which the limited strength of the army will in any manner allow.

THESE NEWS.

Awful Catastrophe.

A Steamboat Destroyed, and Fifty Lives Lost.

We are again called upon to record a steamboat disaster of a most appalling character; and in which FIFTY human beings were hurried into eternity. The boat alluded to is the WASHINGTON, she was destroyed by fire about 3 o'clock, on Saturday morning, while off Silver Creek. We derive the melancholy particulars from the Buffalo papers of Saturday evening.

The Washington, says the Buffalo Commercial of that date passed the North America while the latter lay at Erie in the early part of the night, and was not again seen by those on board the North America until when within about three miles of this city, a bright glare of light was discovered by the helmsman, in the direction of Silver Creek, and the North America was instantly put about for the scene of apprehended disaster.

On nearing the spot, about 6 o'clock, the burning hull of the large and noble boat was found drifting over the waters, three or four miles from shore, with not a living human being on board. The lake was literally covered with hats, bonnets, trunks, baggage, and blackened fragments of the wreck.

The intense anxiety of the witnesses of this fearful scene, for the fate of the passengers of the unfortunate Washington, was partially relieved by the discovery of several small boats near the shore, in which the survivors of the disaster had been rescued from destruction.

The alarm had been given at Silver Creek as soon as the flames were perceived from the shore and all the boats that could be found were sent to the rescue of the sufferers. There were only three skiffs beside the yawl of the Washington, which could be thus used.

The North America took on board about 40 of those saved, many of whom, including all the ladies, remained on shore. There were six dead bodies picked up on the spot—those of four children and two women. One man died of injuries soon after reaching the shore, and one child was dead in its mother's arms when she was taken out of the water.

After picking up all the floating baggage which could be seen, the hull, which was still able to float the engine, was towed into Silver Creek, where it sank in 6 or 8 feet water. The North America remained at Silver Creek, employed in this melancholy duty was done by Captain Edmonds and his crew for the relief of the sufferers. Their prompt and efficient services are entitled to all praise.

The ill-fated Washington was built at Ashtabula last winter, and had made but one trip previous to her destruction. The fire caught near the boilers, and had made such rapid progress when discovered as to defy all attempts to extinguish it. The helm was instantly put about and the boat headed for shore, but in a few moments the wheel ropes were burnt off, and she was rendered an unmanageable wreck. Had iron rods been substituted, as melancholy experience has taught on the Mississippi, this appalling loss of life might have been saved!

We hear that the surviving passengers of the Washington unite in stating that no blame was attributable to Capt. Brown the commander.

We hope and expect that the reported loss of life, as stated above, may prove exaggerated. We have heard, since commencing this article, the loss variously estimated from twenty to sixty. Many of the survivors were badly burned before they left the boat.

We have no statement as to the probable amount of pecuniary damage sustained by this distressing event. The passengers must have suffered heavily. One merchant from Illinois lost \$8,000 in money.

The Buffalo Journal of Saturday evening says:—

The steamboat North America, Captain Edmonds, came to the relief of the Washington. This boat was within some eight or ten miles of this city, but seeing the light the captain very promptly put back, and was thus the means of saving many lives. Several of the passengers were picked up almost exhausted; among whom was a woman with two children in her arms, at least a mile and a half from the wreck—the children were unfortunately dead, however.

The master of the boat and all the officers are among the survivors. The porter, the barber, the wheelman, and two firemen of the crew, are known to be lost.

A most extraordinary and destructive hailstorm occurred near Tate's creek, Ky., about three miles from Lexington, on the night of the 4th instant. The growing rye corn, and hemp, for the space of three miles in width, were almost entirely destroyed.

The hail fell, in a ravine where the storm principally raged, to the remarkable depth of two feet. Thirty five hours after the storm the hail lay upon the ground a foot deep.

DESTRUCTION OF THE STEAM PACKET PULASKI.

Wilmington, June 18, 1838.

Loss of the steam Packet Pulaski, with a crew of thirty-seven, and one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty passengers.

On Thursday, the 14th inst. the steamer Pulaski, Captain Dubois, left Charleston for Baltimore with about 150 passengers, of whom about 50 were ladies.

At about 11 o'clock on the same night, while off the North Carolina coast, say 30 miles from land, weather moderate and night dark, the starboard boiler exploded, and the vessel was lost, with all the passengers and crew except those names are enumerated among the saved in the list to be found below.

We have gathered the following facts from the first mate, Mr. Hibberd, who had charge of the boat at the time. Mr. Hibberd states that at about 10 o'clock at night he was called to the command of the boat, and that he was pacing the promenade deck in front of the steerage-house; that he found himself shortly after, upon the main deck, lying between the mast and side of the boat; that, upon the return of consciousness, he had a confused idea of having heard an explosion, something like that of gunpowder, immediately before he discovered himself in his then situation. He was induced, therefore, to rise and walk aft, where he discovered that the boat midships was blown entirely to pieces; that the head of the starboard boiler was blown out, and the top torn open; that the timbers and plank on the starboard side were forced asunder, and that the boat took water whenever she rolled in that direction.

He became immediately aware of the horrors of their situation, and the danger of letting the passengers know that the boat was sinking, before lowering the small boats. He proceeded, therefore, to do this. Upon dropping the boat, he was asked his object, and he replied that it was to pass around the steamer to ascertain her condition. Before doing this, however, he took in a couple of men. He ordered the other boats to be lowered, and two were shortly put into the water, but they leaked so much in consequence of their long exposure to the sun, that one of them sunk, after a fruitless attempt to bail her. He had in the interim taken several from the water, until the number made ten. In the other boat afloat there were eleven. While they were making a fruitless attempt to bail the small boat, the Pulaski went down with a dreadful crash, in about 45 minutes after the explosion.

Both boats now insisted upon Mr. Hibberd's directing their course to the shore but he resisted their remonstrances, replying that he would not abandon the spot until daylight. At about three o'clock in the morning they started, in the midst of the wailings of the hopeless beings who were floating around in every direction, upon a piece of the wreck, to seek land, which was about thirty miles distant. After pulling about thirteen hours, the persons in both boats became tired, and insisted that Mr. Hibberd should land. This he opposed, thinking it safest to proceed along the coast, and to enter some one of its numerous inlets; but he was at length forced to yield to the general desire, and to attempt a landing upon the beach, a little east of Stump Inlet.

He advised Mr. Cooper, of Ga. who had command of the other boat, and a couple of ladies with two children under his charge, to wait until his boat had first landed, as he apprehended much danger in the attempt; and, should they succeed, they might assist him and the ladies and children. There were eleven persons in the mate's boat, (having taken two black women from Mr. Cooper's.) Of these, two passengers, one of the crew, and the two negro women were drowned, and six gained the shore. After waiting for a signal, which he received from the mate, Mr. Cooper and his companions landed in about three hours after the first boat, in safety. They then proceeded a short distance across Stump Sound, to Mr. Redd's, of Onslow county, where they remained from Friday evening until Sunday morning, and then started for Wilmington. The mate and two passengers reached here this morning, (18th June,) about 9 o'clock.

Further Particulars.

Major Heath and twenty-one others, were rescued from a portion of the wreck of the Pulaski, after having been upon it four days and four nights, without food or water. The suffering became so intense as to produce a proposition to sacrifice one of the party by lot, for the sustenance and support of the rest—but was abandoned to Major Heath's firm and determined opposition.

Major Heath thinks the ladies cabin went down in a mass, carrying down about fifty ladies, most of whom, it is supposed, had not risen from their berths.

The surviving passengers Major Heath represents, are unanimous in charging the Chief Engineer with having caused the dreadful calamity.

There were four parts of the wreck to which passengers clung—two of them, it is supposed, went down—from the other two, twenty-two were thrown overboard, having died with fatigue and excitement.

No baggage of any kind was saved. All the passengers had money, which was in their trunks, and it is estimated that at least \$150,000 in bank notes and specie have been lost, and upwards of \$10,000 in watches and jewelry.

Great Flood—Destruction of Property and Loss of Life at Hollidaysburg.

Extract of a letter to the editors of the Spectator of the Times dated,

Hollidaysburg, June 19th, 1838.

This place was visited this morning by a Flood which, for violence and destruction of property, far exceeds any ever witnessed in this part of the country.

It commenced raining last night about 8 o'clock and continued to pour an unintermitted torrent until about 4, when the water of the Juniata were found to be rising with fearful rapidity. The arches, the of viaduct were soon found insufficient to allow the passage of the flood, and the whole of Gapport was soon under water, the turnpike presenting a continued sheet of water, the rail road for its bank, for half a mile. The water continued to rise until it was 5 feet deep in the lower stories, and the inhabitants were compelled to seek safety up stairs.—Mr. Barrask, wife, and two children and servant girl left their house and attempted to escape. Mrs. B. and the children were drowned, and Mr. B. and the children narrowly escaped, being secured, the former by Patrick Smith and another, and the latter by J. C. Betes, at the imminent hazard of their own lives; Mr. Jos. Kemp, of the Pilot Line, also narrowly escaped drowning. Other lives are said to have been lost, but no bodies have been recovered since those of Mrs. Barrask and the two children.

The waves had now risen to the top of the viaduct, and were flowing completely over the railroad below it. The towers Messrs. Culbertson & Chambers, standing between the bridge and viaduct, were carried entirely away; nothing being left of it the floor which lodged on the top of viaduct.

The waves at length forced breaches the railroad between the viaduct and scales, through which the waters now flow their way, carrying with them one of Dozer's triple boats, which was standing the road, and now lies high and dry in a neighboring field. This additional lowered the waters at the viaduct and the railroad below. About 6 o'clock waters began to fall, and disclose the damage they had been doing.

The railroad was washed away in places entirely down to the original soil, stone blocks hanging to the rail; in places the earth and stone are washed around the blocks. There are four breaches in the canal between this and Frankfort and it will take some weeks to place in order for business again. The turn bridges are carried away, and from all parts of the country on the branches of the J. & A. we hear of saw-mills swept off, or destroyed, fences carried away and gas demolished.

Gaysport, and the bottom from them Frankstown, present a scene of destruction pitiable to look upon.

Several canal boats are lying in the water, the crews barely escaping with their lives. The feeder to the canal is also swept off short, a few hours has destroyed what take the labor of hundreds of hands many days to restore.

Charles Hughes had his house furnished with 150 cords of wood, and all spring work carried off, barely saving family. An estimate of the whole amount of loss cannot yet be made.

MIRACULOUS ESCAPE.

During the hurricane on last Tuesday evening, a house situated in the N. about four miles below the city below to Richard Peltz, formerly owned by John Wonderly, was struck by lightning, nothing but a miracle saved all the inmates from destruction. The Dwelling, tenanted by Mr. John Book, is a large double house which sustained great injury, particularly the westerly part, the lightning struck the chimney and broken it off at the roof, knocking a hole about three square through the end wall of the house, and then proceeding downwards, through the hearth in the second story, breaking every pane of glass in that part of the building—Mr. Book and family all retired, and the night being excessively warm, he took a pillow and laid down the floor about three feet from the fire, where the lightning afterward went the. The door which communicates to this house, is in the centre, and there is a balcony each side. There were likewise two, one of which was loaded, standing in the corner, opposite to where Mr. Book was lying. When the electric fluid came to the chimney, the steel on the locks, guns attracted the main part of it, and caused them to explode, and shattered into pieces; it went directly through said door, of which there is only a about half a foot remaining to one of the hinges; broke off the part of the bed the door, shattered to pieces the head and did sundry other damages; but was so full to relate, not one of the family was the least injured. Mr. Book was so stunned that he lay about an hour apparently lifeless. When he recovered he complained of his head and breast, and particularly his hands, which were shock-burned, but whether from the effects of the lightning or the explosion of the guns he cannot exactly say. In the basement story, among other damages, a large was so twisted and bent up that it has preserved as a specimen of the powerful effects of the lightning.

(Pennsylvania)