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AND COMMERCIAL JOURNAL.

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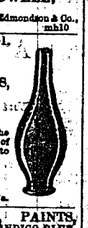

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WEDNESDAY MORNING, NOV. 26.

The Situation.

The Army of the Potomac is now massed on the north bank of the Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg, preparing two bridges on which to cross—one for the infantry and cavalry, the other for the artillery and baggage trains. The river must be crossed in the face of the enemy, whose force is not known. The passage must be made under the cover of the batteries of our side, the operations of which will be stoutly resisted by the artillery of the enemy. Perhaps a flank movement will be made, and the river crossed by a part of the army at some point beyond the range of the enemy's batteries.

The city of Fredericksburg had not been shelled at the latest advices. As the rebel forces do not occupy the city, to shell it would be but a wanton destruction of property, and would not weaken the position of the enemy at all. Whether the passage of the river will be seriously disputed can only be known by the event; but whatever battle there may be will be principally by cannon. The passage of the river is a difficult undertaking, and can only be effected by thorough preparation and the concentration of a great force.

From Fredericksburg to Richmond the way is not difficult. There are a direct railroad and two good parallel wagon roads, all of which will be used in the advance. There are reasons for believing that while Burnside shall keep the rebel army in play on the north side of Richmond, a formidable expedition of land and water forces will be sent against the rebel capital from the south by way of James River, and compel Gen. Lee to divide his army before the army of the Union can reach the fortifications on the north of the city. This arrangement would not only render the capture of Richmond easier, but would cut off the retreat of the rebel army towards the South.

Jackson is supposed to be hovering about Winchester, and is reported to have 40,000 men; but he will be obliged to join the main rebel army as soon as Burnside crosses the Rappahannock.

From Gen. Burnside's Army--The Desolation of Virginia--Slavery and the Poor Whites--How the "White Trash" Live Without Work --The Only Cure for the Present Destitution and Desolation.

FALMOUTH, OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, VA., Friday, Nov. 21, 1862.

The further we get into Virginia the more am I struck by the utter desolation of the country and the evident poverty of its inhabitants. One must—if from "Yankee" land—see the degradation of the inhabitants to comprehend it. Used to emptying and producing farms, cultivated with all the aids and appliances of modern agriculture; to thriving villages, where the mechanic arts flourish and give wealth and ease to the citizens; to the various church-spires that stand on every hill and in each valley, the neatly painted school-houses at every "four corners," this utter want of all the evidences of civilization is most striking and depressing.

Here are no well-cultivated farms—500 acres barely support a small family of the better class of whites; no school-houses at the corners, for education would elevate a place to whom the habits and customs of the aristocracy forbid the opportunities for improvement; none of the mechanical or elegant arts, for the households of the F. F. Vs. disdain, in their bigoted blindness, all their elevating necessaries and enjoyments from the despised "mudsills" of the North.

Slave-breeding, supplies (or has supplied) the purses of the upper classes, while their farms, deteriorating from year to year, have barely yielded them the commonest "hog and hominy" required for the home diet of the section. All books, all music, all wines, all luxuries of every sort, have been the product of a trade in souls—too frequently of a trade in the offspring of a trader. Now that all this is cut off, even the wealthier citizens, the aristocracy of the land, must revert to the original "hog and hominy" of the country and leave luxuries to some dim, elysian future.

I have often wondered how the white trash live. They do not work, unless the planting of a little corn, the grazing of a horse, or mule, and cow, and the raising of a few hogs and poultry—who run nearly wild—may be called "work." Still they live, and they raise many tow-headed children who perpetuate the unwholesome stock. I have often, I say, wondered how they live. I have ascertained!

These poor whites—ignored by the aristocracy and despised by the blacks—exist on whisky. In this wise: Scratching together a few dollars (eight or ten was sufficient in time of peace) they purchase a barrel or two of cheap whisky. The negroes are very fond of liquor, and never honestly getting any excepting during the "holidays"—steal from their masters corn, wheat and chickens. These things they "trade" with the poor whites for drink. They will give two or three bushels of corn or wheat, a hog, half a dozen chickens, for a pint of poor liquor, and in this way the degraded white men that infest this coun try exist.

It is a terrible style of life: the natural result of Slavery. With paid labor, and any sort of encouragement to others, than landed proprietors; these men might be small farmers, mechanics, laborers of all sorts: honest men. These Virginians would be independent of other people for their luxuries and refinements. But slavery blights all the land, prevents competition in trade, mechanics, or agriculture, and puts a veto on improvement of every description.

They cling to it as a "patriarchal institution," as they cling to all other exploded and useless ideas. And while slavery continues to blight the land, even the return of peace will fail to place Virginia where she might be. Once the proudest of States, her clinging to a barbarous and wicked institution has brought her so low that nothing can now save her except an utter revolution in her economy, her institutions, her manners and customs. She needs the infusion of hardy Northern blood. She must be "Yankeeised," and, please, God, she will be. Is there not land enough lying idle here that shall give farms and pleasant homes to an immigration equal to the whole of this great Army of the Potomac?

When the day comes that witnesses the end of slavery in Virginia, we shall see the opening of a new and vigorous life, for which her great extent, the natural fertility of her soil, her varied surface and facilities for improvement, give ample scope. Till then she is, indeed, a desolate and ruined Commonwealth. God grant we may live to rejoice over her regeneration.—*N. Y. Tribune Correspondent.*

STRONG BROWN PAPER IS NOW manufactured at the Salisbury Paper Mills, in Orange county, N. Y., from "cat tails," the growth of the wild flag growing in low ground all over the North. The proprietor, Mr. Oakley, is experimenting with a view of making white paper, also, from the same material.

Indian Atrocities in Minnesota.

We make a short extract from a letter recently received in this city from a lady residing at Sauk Rapids, Minnesota, in which she gives some account of the atrocities perpetrated by the Indians. The writer was delicately brought up in Western New York, but was forced with her husband to make a new home in Minnesota, in consequence of pecuniary troubles. After giving a thrilling account of her own escape, she continues:

"One woman near the Minnesota river had two children, both boys, one about twelve years, the other under two. She told the eldest never to leave his brother, but to save him if he could. He accordingly took his little brother and made his escape to the bush. The mother was dangerously wounded with three bullets. A young Indian seeing that she still lived, beat her about the head till he left her for dead. She revived, however, and crawled to the house, where she found her husband dead. She then started for the nearest town, sixty miles, where there were whites people. She lived on raw corn, once caught a chicken, which she eat raw, and finally reached a place of safety. Her little son traveled with his baby brother on his back till he came across one of the neighbors, who was badly wounded, and had lain down to die. He told the boy that it was useless to try to save their lives, for the Indians would certainly kill them. The boy replied that his mother told him to save his brother, and he should do it. This so encouraged the man, that he got up and accompanied the boy. They traveled by night, and finally reached a place of safety, when the first person the boy saw was his mother, whom he never expected to see in this world again. The mother and the wounded neighbor have recovered from their wounds. Many of the bodies of persons killed by the Indians are mutilated in the most horrible manner; they tear out the heart and put the head in the cavity; cut off the hands and feet, and place them one on the other. It seems impossible that there should exist such dreadful fiends on this earth. When I see an Indian, I feel as if I wanted to shoot him."

Another woman fought the Indians all night. Her husband being wounded, she put her children, five in number, down in the cellar, hung feather beds to the windows, and fired at the Indians through the holes between the logs. She killed two, when they retired. She escaped with her children and went back for her husband, who has now recovered. But I have told you enough of these heart rending scenes. More than one half the families in the State have some tale of hardship or murder to relate. Perhaps a dozen or two of cheap whisky. The negroes are very fond of liquor, and never honestly getting any excepting during the "holidays"—steal from their masters corn, wheat and chickens. These things they "trade" with the poor whites for drink. They will give two or three bushels of corn or wheat, a hog, half a dozen chickens, for a pint of poor liquor, and in this way the degraded white men that infest this coun try exist.

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LARGE DEPOSIT OF HONEY.—A somewhat singular discovery was made in a house in St. Louis. The Argus gives the following account of the story: "The inmates of one of our largest up-town mansion houses, a few days since, were surprised to find a large number of bees flying about in two of the upper rooms. As the little fellows continued to occupy the places, a bee naturalist was sent to investigate. On entering the rooms he exclaimed, 'You have honey somewhere here,' and proceeded to search for it. On removing the fireboard he discovered that one flue of the chimney was full of honey comb, and which was hanging down into the fire place, and the honey dropping from it; proceeding to the top of the house to sound the chimney, he found the same; one flue of the chimney was full, and the bees were industriously at work; there also. These flues of the chimney had never been used; they were plastered smooth inside, and were perfectly dark, a stone having been placed on the top of each flue. The bees had descended the adjoining flues, and found small holes about ten inches from the top of the chimney, leading into the closed flues, and through these holes they made their way in and out. They have, as is supposed occupied these for three years having been kept warm in the winter by the heat of the adjoining flues. On removing the fire-board, the bees, seeing the great light which had broken in upon them, descended to the room and gathered on the winders, until they were covered to the thickness of three inches. It is estimated that there are in the two flues from 40,000 to 50,000 bees, and from 2000 to 3000 pounds of honey."

STRANGE ESCAPE FROM SUICIDE.—The following story the London Times says, has been confirmed by M. Duroc, the Mayor of Pont-aux-Anes, who is now in London: "An inn keeper at Pont-aux-Anes, driven to despair by the fanaticism of his wife and the interference of the priesthood, determined on su