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WHOLE NUMBER 106.

MISCELLANY.

[FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRESS.]

From Montgomery.

MONTGOMERY, Ala., May 2, 1855.

Editors of the Press: I sit down this hot evening to write you another letter, which shall be the last you will receive from me for many a day. I hope to write my next, some months hence, some thousand miles away, and that the burden of it may be

"The battles, sieges, dangers I have passed, And hair-breadth 'scapes in the imminent deadly breach."

I say hope, for the future is uncertain, and though

"Tis not in mortals to command success, They may do more, *deserve it!*"

Let me grow dull in the progress of this letter, I must apologetically premise that I have just returned from dinner. The mind is the slave of the body, deriving from it its complexion, tone and vigor. Physiology thus far confirms the doctrine of Materialism. I may, then, charge to the obscuring process of digestion any unusual dullness I may exhibit. My frequent communications of late may make me liable to the charge of the "cacocholia (correctly co-coethos) scribendi" disease. Like the post-master who being removed for "proximity," indignantly denied the charge, so do I. I do not love to write, and I will fight a duel with anybody who says I do. I abhor, loathe this thing of writing. For that loathing I sold out cheap to you, and quit the abhorred business. For that loathing, I have refused the editorship of a dozen papers, which has been offered me. I had rather drive a bark mill, turn a grind-stone, or work in a tread-mill, than to be under the compulsion to write. Write! write!! write!!! It used to sound to me like the unrelenting command to the Wandering Jew, who, with bruised and weary feet, had a hundred times traversed the earth, and was about to sink exhausted upon some green spot to rest, when the awful sound rang in his ear, March! march!! march!!! Within the last year, I have written nothing. I say nothing, for a few articles for our city papers, and those you have published, are the only exceptions. And hereafter I shall be still more chary. As for the gratification of being lauded by the press, (not yours, but the press in general,) it has ceased to be an object with me. I have enjoyed flattery in sickening profusion. It no longer soothes my ear. So you will not hear from me again until or unless the circumstances occur which are indicated in the first part of this letter.

I was asked this morning, by a General who did start to Cuba, if I was going there. I told him if he had not quit taking the Press he would have seen that I was not. My last letter was written to save the lives of some of the reckless young men of the South, who are ready to risk them in this fantastic adventure. Indeed most of the letters I receive are from young men who think I am going to Cuba. I will give a few extracts from some of them, merely to show the spirit in which they are written. Several are from Abbeville and Edgefield. I have been surprised at the character of the men who propose to go, some of them being men of mature age, and among the first men in those Districts:—

"AUGUSTA, Ga.—B. L. POSEY.—Dear Sir: I have just read your letter in the Press. Although I cannot find in the article any specifications of the plan, or even an idea of the character or destination of the expedition; yet if it is what you declare it to be, (and I rely upon your judgment,) I will go with you to any country "north of H—ll." Please give me, as soon as possible, all the information you can.

"Yours truly, K."

"S. C. COLLEGE, April 24, '55.—B. L. POSEY, Esq.—Dear Sir: Your communication to the Press in regard to the letters you have received, concerning the Expedition spoken of, is not quite satisfactory in my case; for I want to graduate here, and if the Company should leave before the first of December next, I will not be able to join it; and, besides, I should like before I leave to make some arrangement of my money matters. I hope you will answer this as soon as you can, and let me know at what time it is probable you will leave, and, if possible, to what country you go.

"As I have known you by character for some time, it is more on your account that I go than any other, and I hope, through your influence, to obtain a situation in which I may be able to do all that I can, for I go into this thing with all my heart."

"GREENSBORO, Ala.—W. L. POSEY, Esq.—Dear Sir: Having noticed in a Mobile paper, copied from an Abbeville (S. C.) pa-

per, a letter from you, calling on the young men of the country to engage in an enterprise which I suppose pertains to the affairs of Cuba with our country, and being desirous of entering into such a scheme, I thought it not improper to drop you a few lines on the subject. If the project you refer to is of this character, I would like to enter into it, and in that case request you to inform me by what means we may more fully communicate with each other. I have for some time been desirous of aiding in the overthrow of the power of Spain in Cuba, and you will find me always ready for any enterprise that promises success.

"References can be furnished you as to my position and character whenever it is necessary. If you have any acquaintances in this place, you can address them on the subject. I have no doubt that I can obtain several young men in this place, if you will give me instructions how to act about the matter."

"WARRENTON, N. C.—B. L. POSEY, Esq.—Dear Sir: Having seen your advertisement for young men to go on a secret expedition, and being desirous of engaging in something of the sort, I address you this, requesting the favor that you will give me some little insight in regard to your proposed Expedition. I am by birth a Virginian, by adoption a North Carolinian; and having traveled nearly if not quite all over the world, I cannot divest myself of a disposition to go on any expedition that may offer itself. The greater the danger, the more anxious am I to engage in it.—Any information you may give me will be received as strictly confidential. Any reference you want, I can give. An answer, at your earliest convenience, is respectfully solicited by

"Yours, &c., L. U."

"OFFICE OF THE MEMPHIS —, Memphis, April 16, 1855.—B. L. POSEY.—Dear Sir: I see in the Press a letter from you in reference to an Expedition. I wish to join an expedition. I have several times the amount of money requisite, and can use the influence of this paper with which I am connected. References—James C. Jones, U. S. Senate, F. P. Stanton, M. C., business community of West Tennessee. I can make some negotiations, if a good speculation offers. Twenty-two years of age; fond of excitement; and not afraid to fight. If you will break your rules, and answer this, you will oblige

J. S. C.—

"Senator Jones is in the office and tells me to go to it, he will back me."

"CANTON, Miss., April 20, 1855.—B. L. POSEY.—Dear Sir: I read in the Family Visitor that you are raising a Company to go to Cuba. I am very anxious to go with you; so just sound your bugle, and I will come to Montgomery immediately.

"Please answer this proposition immediately."

Since I wrote my last letter I have clipped from an exchange a history of an attack on Cuba, nearly a hundred years ago. As it goes to illustrate my view of the subject, I send it for publication:—

CAPTURE OF HAVANA.—A writer in the New York Mirror is showing the difference between taking Havana on paper and taking it *vi et armis*. The memories of the filibusters are refreshed with an account of the attack upon the place by the English in 1762, and its disastrous results:—"The English fleet consisted of nineteen ships of the line and eighteen frigates, with various smaller vessels of war, and some two hundred transports, under command of Pocock, and ten thousand soldiers, under Gen. Monckton. The cannonade, we are told, continued seven days; the siege had lasted twenty days, with little hope of taking the Moro. At this time the English received a reinforcement of four thousand fresh troops.—Now, inspired with new hopes, the attack was renewed, their exertions redoubled, and at last with success. On the twenty-second day of this memorable siege the fort was captured. The city held out a few days, and then surrendered, to prevent unnecessary sacrifice of life.—The loss sustained by the English army and navy was horrible. The English historian, aware how dearly this victory was obtained, prudently omitted to record the number killed and wounded. Cotemporary writers (not English) say this fort cost England over one thousand men."

The Moro castle is as strong now as it was in 1762. And though the power of Spain and the character of her soldiery have prodigiously fallen off since then, still Havana could not easily be taken. Even if the filibusters got possession of the island, while the Spaniards kept Havana, the conquest of the island would be hardly begun. Spain would still have her fleet, the best harbor and strongest point in Cuba, with the communication open, and could land another hundred thousand men to reinforce the garrison.

I was told by a young man, the other day, that he was invited to join an army for Cuba. He said that the force was already raised, every office and the ranks filled, complete and compact, of ten thousand men. He said it was soon to sail.—

I disbelieve this tale, (not the teller,) although I do know that one Gen. Q. is engaged in this business. He passed here recently, and dropped a hint or so.

But as poor Lopez said, so say I, "Adieu, sweet Cuba!"

We are in the midst of the most gloomy circumstances. Our misfortunes come not "As single spies, but in battalions."

And the end of them is not yet. Still there is no rain, and no prospect of rain. One of our editors, the other day, said "it I forgot how to rain." The very heavens seem turned to brass, and the earth to ashes. The trees are dying of the drought. The steamboats are all stuck hard and fast on the shoals, and must stick there until it rains. When will come the millennium of rain? There's no joking about it—the times are awful. If it does not rain soon, starvation will stalk like a Leviathan over the land. In some of the counties above here, corn sells for five dollars a bushel.—Here it is nominally about one dollar twenty-five, but no body has it to sell. To add to our woes, the WINTER mills, which supplied all this section, were burned down night before last. This is a common calamity. Everybody feels it. To-day meal commands two dollars and a half a bushel, and this morning about five hundred barrels of flour, saved from the fire, were sold at auction at from twelve to sixteen dollars and a half per barrel! This is bad enough, but if it does not rain, the thing will grow worse every day. Hams sell for eighteen cents; chickens thirty-three cents. Day before yesterday WINTER was giving three dollars a bushel for wheat. This will give you an idea of the cost of living here.

The loss of the WINTERS by the fire is about fifty-five thousand dollars, which is relieved to the amount of twenty-five thousand by insurance. A part of the building, worth one hundred thousand dollars, was saved. They bear their loss with admirable unconcern, and have gone undauntedly to work to put up the mills on a larger scale.

Whatever may be said of JOHN G. WINTER, he has been a blessing to every place where he has been, especially to this city. His energy, his sagacity, and the employment of his vast fortune, have done much for this part of Alabama. Almost at his own exclusive expense he built a plank road eighty miles north of this city, reaching nearly to Tennessee. This splendid road the Legislature of Alabama confiscated and took to public use, after he had spent over two hundred thousand dollars on it. But for this, I do not believe he would have allowed the St. Mary's Bank to suspend. He thought himself plundered by the Legislature of Alabama, and he knew how to get even with them. It is true he incidentally hurt a few bill holders out of this State, but that was only an incident. As for the bills, they never will be redeemed. I assure the holders of them they may as well burn them. It cannot be denied that WINTER has done much for this city. He has built for it a plank road eighty miles long; he has erected mills and manufactories worth three hundred thousand dollars, and has increased the population of the city two or three hundred by his employees. He has ransacked every market for wheat and corn, and regularly supplied the city with flour and meal at reasonable prices. He has kept the market even and uniform, not availing himself of occasions to extort high prices. I heard a gentleman say that WINTER had saved this city one hundred thousand dollars in the single matter of exchanges.—When he opened his banking house here, exchange on New York was at 8 or 4 per cent. premium. He reduced it to 1, and resisted all overtures and remonstrances from the other brokers to increase it. Since then it has remained at or below 1. He sold in one year nineteen millions of dollars of exchange. These are the benefits he has done for this city, and they are worthy to be reckoned against his faults.

When, the other night, I saw the old man, with his whitened locks, walking amid the ruins of his splendid buildings, and the loss of such immense property, unexcited, unmoved, and calm as a May morning, giving his well conceived orders in his clear, emphatic tones, I could not but admire the behavior of the man. He is no common man. His manners are very agreeable; his conversational powers are very great, and I have heard that he makes a good speech. His fortune is supposed to amount to something between a half and a whole million of dollars.

I can think of nothing else to write about, unless to attempt a description of our town and some of its prominent men. Our town holds a population of about seven thousand, and covers about as much ground as your capital, Columbia. It is built upon a bluff of the river, and a semicircular range of hills. Some of the streets are high, broken, and precipitous. I think this gives it an additional beauty. The pretty cottages perched upon the hill-tops, with the slopes carpeted by a green covering of grass, have a very taking look. It has less of ornament, in trees and cultivated gardens, than your beautiful and pretentious Columbia, but it has the advantage in the number of its elegant private mansions.—Two of our nabobs, who were building fine houses, made a swap, in which boot was given to the amount of sixteen thousand dollars. When that much was given as boot, between two new unfinished buildings, you can guess at the whole value of the buildings. This town was about five years ago the richest town or city in the world, according to population. The late influx of population has not brought much wealth. This has reduced the average, but I have no doubt that Montgomery is still the richest town or city in the world. In a voting population of six hundred, there are upwards of thirty persons who are worth one hundred thousand dollars, or over one man in every twenty worth over one hundred thousand dollars. Abbeville is one of the richest Districts in South Carolina. Just let any man apply this ratio to his neighborhood, and see how the account stands. It is true, some of these fortunes were made by "sharp transactions," and perhaps sharper than honest. About the year of our Lord 1839, just on the heels of "the flush times of Alabama," everybody broke. In 1840, the Whig Congress of the United States made up a panacea and healing plaster for broken backs, in the shape of a bankrupt law. These men took its benefits, paid off their debts at ten or twenty cents in the dollar, and took a new start. Now they are rich, and roll in magnificence.

By the way, this place is made up of the sharpest and shrewdest men in the world. The acuminated point of a diamond is no sharper than their wits. Nowhere else have I seen so much general intelligence. Your State is nowhere in the comparison. Our town might also have literary pretensions, if all the talent were not absorbed in the law. Out of that circle, however, we have Dr. LIPSCOMB, who is a match for any man. Messrs. HILLIARD and MOSS and YANCEY have a taste for letters not entirely drowned in the law. Mr. HILLIARD unites three rather incompatible avocations—those of lawyer, preacher, and politician. He succeeds well in all of them. He has a good practice at law. He preaches nearly every Sunday. He was the member of Congress from this District for some years. His present aspirations seem to be for the next Vice Presidency, for which he has been recommended by several papers. Mr. HILLIARD is a very impressive and polished rhetorician. He commenced his career as a "saddle-bags Methodist preacher," and has since been a Professor of Belles Lettres in some College. Some haughty old fellow refused him his daughter when and because he was "saddle-bags preacher." Parents are not always prophets. JEFF DAVIS had to run off with old TAYLOR's daughter, and FLEMING with old BENTON's, simply because they were young and obscure Lieutenants in the army. So the girls are sometimes smarter, in matrimonial matters, than their papas. But this is off the subject. Mr. HILLIARD, I have no doubt, is a devious man, yet he has tastes that would hardly suit your old-fashioned Methodists. He has fine taste, and dresses elegantly. To see him drive up to church and alight from a superb carriage, behind a flashy pair of one thousand dollar horses, and take out two or three pretty and showy ladies, you would hardly take him for the man that was to preach. These things, however, are only the emanations of the poetry of his nature. He is no trifler, nor fond of levity, but is a sad, solemn, and deeply contemplative man. He has had a life of strange vicissitudes, and these have written a sad epic poem upon his face.

I have spoken before of the shrewdness and capacity of our business men. As an instance, one of them made forty thousand dollars last year, by his financial operations, on his credit. His profits this year will

double that sum. Another, who, eighteen months ago, was not worth five hundred dollars, has, by his mere management and wits, made over one hundred thousand dollars, and his fortune is increasing by an income of five hundred dollars a day. A young lawyer very quietly obtained the management of a case, out of which he has already made thirty thousand dollars.

Do not these instances satisfy you of the truth of what I have said about the sharpness of our people?

But this letter is already too long. In closing it here, I bid you a long, long adieu!

Yours, truly, BEN LANE.

[FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRESS.]

Know Nothingism.

SIRS: I know the tone and sentiment of your paper to be against most of the principles of that party, and to demand your columns for the publication of opinions in opposition to that tone and sentiment, would seem, at first glance, both arbitrary and unreasonable; yet as a matter of pastime, without wishing to compromise your position or opinions, I offer you a few random reflections, simply for what they are worth.

I am not one of the party, and hence perhaps I am at liberty to discuss the thing as it may seem commensurate with my understanding of it. To say that it does not merit even the most assiduous consideration of every true citizen of this country, whose mind is imbued with the faintest glow of patriotism, is, I think, unjust, since the vast number of its councils, and the almost unprecedented increase in the list of its membership, and that, too, in so short a time throughout all the States of this Union. I must repeat that it cannot be charged with the merit of insignificance; but, on the other hand, it has amongst its member a great number of the best men of all the old political parties of the country, to say nothing of those outside of the party who warmly advocate its principles. Suffice it to say, then, that we are not presumptuous in giving to the subject our greatest consideration. Well, then, what can be the great aim of the party? What its ultimate desiderata? Is it the overthrow of Popery and foreign influence in the United States? To me, at first glance, such aim seems tantamount if not superior to all others in the manifestations of this party, and with that aim every true American ought the most fully and implicitly to agree.

I am resolutely enthusiastic to applaud that laudable spirit of conservatism that recoils at, or that would approach with extreme caution, the sanction of so serious an innovation upon the old established political customs and usages of the country. For not having peeped behind the scene, nor witnessed their proceedings "sub rosa," we are not positively certain that they may not lurk there things repugnant to our republican sentiments and fancies, and hence, I say, it should be with some considerable degree of caution, that we approach a uniform concurrence in all the principles and doings of that party. Its secret policy is a radical objection, indeed the only great hobgoblin and bugbear of the thing, whose influence of example, from the consideration of its vast and rapid success, may actuate the sudden uprising of other sects, cliques and juntas, who may spring upon the country designs inimical and even subversive of the government. But their answer to this objection seems to be, that, as they are battling for the demolition of certain great influences antagonistic of our institutions and immunities, to forewarn would be to fore-arm—and that it requires majorities to carry any measure of legislation before the country; and hence any sect or secret party with designs inimical to the government will have that difficulty; for it is not reasonable to suppose that enough men can be found, now, in the country, who would join and remain in a party having designs against the government. I repeat that there are not enough men to constitute a majority, to be found in the country now, who would remain in any secret party professing such evil intentions in secret conclave. And I presume there is no honest minded man now in the party of Know Nothings, who has the least love of country burning in his bosom, who would not wage a war of extermination against them, if he saw in their secret deliberations any attempt, or even the least semblance of attempt, to fasten anything like evil designs upon the country. If there be any influence in the United States capable of any such evil—aye, diabolical—de-

signs against this government, I venture it is to be found within the pale of the Roman Catholic religion. And I cannot think that we are true to ourselves, to our institutions, and to our destiny, if you please, to oppose a party having for its principal object the death of Popery in the United States. It is true, the party makes the show of a list of principles; but when properly surveyed and investigated, it will be perceived that they merely tend to subvert the one great end—the overthrow of the Roman Catholic influence in this government.

Our Constitution, it is true, abjures all religious interference; but what if it can be shown that papists are neither christians nor citizens. The former proposition I spurn to debate; but the latter, however, I will proceed at once to show. To become a citizen of this republic a foreign immigrant is compelled, amongst other things, to swear his unalterable allegiance to this government, and to be true to that oath of allegiance, so long as he remains under it, or until he makes himself the legal citizen of some other government. I say, he must swear his allegiance to this government, and in swearing that, he is in no way engaged in the vague fooleries of a school-boy's play. But suppose he stands sworn to the irrefragable dicta of the Pope of Rome? Of what merit, I ask, is his oath of allegiance to our constitution, when he can at a word be absolved from it by the Pope? The oath of allegiance to this government, in the requisitions of American citizenship, is by far above all other obligations; but his Holiness, the Pope, has convinced his subjects here, as elsewhere, of his utter infallibility, and of the inviolability of the Catholic oath of allegiance to the Pope, and that all oaths outside of the Roman Catholic religion are at once nugatory and worthless. And I have not the least doubt, myself, if they are perfectly worthless so far as concerns their fealty to this government.

Well, then, with what sort of face can a Catholic immigrant take the oath of allegiance to this government? Is it not at once apparent that he wears upon his face the stain of perjury as big as the moon? And of what, let me ask, is such a citizen capable?

"Treason, stratagems and spoils!"

Let us, in this connection, allow ourselves a slight squint at the Pope's last bull to the Bishops and Priests of the United States, and we can at once determine how far they are affected by the charms of this republican government.—He says: "General education promotes infidelity, and checks the progress of Catholicity; bible societies are engines of mischief; the freedom of the press is a most foul plague; liberty of conscience a prolific source of heresy and crime. Demolish these, and Catholicism has nothing to fear in the United States." Yes, demolish these, and the American government is demolished, and the republican guaranties of its constitution are blown to the winds. Without making any very luminous professions of the faculty of vaticination, I will, for this once, offer you the prognostic that, unless the American people oppose to the death by all and every means in the world, not only the doctrines contained in that bull, but even the sect by which such doctrines, in this country, are entertained, the glories of this republic, in less than fifty years, "will be seen through that medium that lends enchantment to the view."

It is curious to me that we should hug to our bosoms, and endow with equal political privileges, a great sect who, under the guise of a christian denomination, are secretly striking at the very foundation of our institutions—a sect who have sworn eternal allegiance to the most arbitrary and despotic ipse dixit of the Pope—who are sworn, and believe, from the very strongest prejudices of education, that the Pope is the viceregent of God on this earth, and the only medium through which the mandates, decrees, and will of high heaven can be vialied upon any of the whole human race—a sect who, in all time past, in the history of the world, have been most equal, atrocious, and unflinching enemies to civilization, to humanity, and to constitutional freedom. Since the time has arrived when our republicanism should make the most august and convincing demonstrations of the superior and transcendent materials of which it is composed.

Instead of counting at the extension of a sect, the influences of which are subversive of the purest principles of the christian re-

ligion against this government, I venture it is to be found within the pale of the Roman Catholic religion. And I cannot think that we are true to ourselves, to our institutions, and to our destiny, if you please, to oppose a party having for its principal object the death of Popery in the United States. It is true, the party makes the show of a list of principles; but when properly surveyed and investigated, it will be perceived that they merely tend to subvert the one great end—the overthrow of the Roman Catholic influence in this government.

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