We discussed two or three bottles of wine with much gayety and relish. Sandford, especially, was in exuberant spirits: brimming over with brilliant anecdotes and sparkling badinage. He saw in me a fresh, rich prey, and his eager spirit revelled by anticipation in the victory which he nothing doubted to obtain over my "excellent intentions and wife pledged virtue." About half-past twelve o'clock he proposed to adjourn. This was eagerly assented to by Mr. Merton, who had for some time exhibited unmistakeable symptoms of impatience and unrest.

'You will accompany us, Waters?' said Sandford, as we arose to depart.

'There is, I suppose, no vow registered in the matrimonial archives against *looking on* at a game played by others.'

'Oh no! but don't ask me to play.'

'Certainly not;' and a devilish sneer curled his lip. 'Your virtue shall suffer no temptation, be assured.'

We soon arrived before the door of a quiet, respectable looking house in one of the streets leading from the Strand; a low, peculiar knock, given by Sandford, was promptly answered; then a password, which I did not catch, was whispered by him through the keyhole, and we passed in.

We proceeded up stairs to the first floor, the shutters of which were carefully closed, so that no intimation of what was going on could possibly reach the street. The apartment was brilliantly lighted; roulette table and dice and cards were in full activity; wine and liquors of all varieties were profusely parade. There were about a half-a dozen persons present, I soon discovered, besides the gang, and that comprised eleven or twelve well-dressed desperadoes, whose sinister aspects induced a momentary qualm lest one or more of the pleasant party might suspect or recognize my vocation. This, however, I reflected was scarcely possible. My beat, during the short period I had been in the force, was far distant from the usual haunts of such gentry, and I was otherwise unknown in London. Still, questioning glances were eagerly directed towards my introducer; and one big, burly fellow, a foreigner—the rascals were the scum of various countries—was very unpleasantly inquisitorial.

'*J'en reponds!*' I heard Sandford say in answer to his irritated queries; and he added something in a whisper which brought a sardonic smile to the fellow's lips, and induced a total change in his demeanor towards myself. This was re-assuring; for though provided with pistols, I should, I felt, have little chance with such utterly reckless ruffians as those by whom I was surrounded. Play was proposed; and though at first stoutly refusing, I feigned to be gradually overcome by irresistable temptation, and sat down to blind hazard with my foreign friend for mode rate stakes. I was graciously allowed to win; and in the end I found myself richer in devil's money by about ten pounds. Mr. Merton was soon absorbed in the chances of the dice, and lost large sums, for which, when the money he had brought with him was exhausted, he gave written acknowledgments. The cheating practised upon him was really audacious; and any one but a tyro must have repeatedly detected it. He, however, appeared not to entertain the slightest suspicion of "fair play" of his opponents, guiding himself entirely by the advice of his friend and counsellor, Sandford, who did not himself play. The The amiable assemblage broke up about six in the morning, each person retiring singly by the back way, receiving, as he departed, a new password for the next evening.

A few hours afterwards I waited on the commissioner to report the state of affairs — He was delighted with the fortunate *debut* I had made, but still strictly enjoined patience and caution. It would have been easy, as I was in possession of the password, to have surprised the confederacy in the act of gaming that very evening; but this would only have accomplished a part of the object aimed at. Several of the fraternity, Sandford amongst the number, were suspected of uttering forged foreign bank-notes, and it was essential to watch narrowly for legal evidence to insure their conviction. It was also desirable to restore, if possible, the property and securities of which Mr. Merton had been pillaged.

Nothing of especial importance occurred for seven or eight days. Gaming went on as usual every evening, and Mr. Merton became, of course, more and more involved; even to his sister's jewels—which he had surreptitiously obtained, to such a depth of degradation will this vice plunge men otherwise honorable—had been staked and lost; and he was, by the advice of Sandford, about to conclude a heavy mortgage upon his estate, in order not only to clear off his enormous debts of honor, but to acquire fresh means of 'winning back' that *ignis fatuus* of all gamblers—his tremendous losses!

A new preliminary 'dodge' was, I observed, now brought into action. Mr. Merton es teemed himself a knowing hand at *ecarte*: it was introduced; and he was permitted to win every game he played, much to the apparent annoyance and discomfiture of the losers.—As this was precisely the snare into which I had myself fallen, I of course the more readily detected it, and felt quite satisfied that a *grand coup* was meditated. In the mean time I had not been idle. Sandford was *confidentially* informed that I was only waiting in London to receive between four and five thousand pounds, part of Uncle Passgrove's legacy, and then intended to immediately hasten back to canny Yorkshire. To have seen the villain's eyes as I incidentally, as it were, announced my errand and intention! They fairly flashed with infernal glee! Ah, Sandford, Sandford! you were, with all your cunning, but a sand-blind idiot to believe the man you had wronged and ruined could so easily forget the debt he owed you!

The crisis came swiftly on. Mr. Merton's mortgage money was to be paid on the morrow; and on that day, too, I announced the fabulous thousands receivable by me were to be handed over. Mr. Merton, elated by his repeated triumphs at *ecarte*, and prompted by his friend Sandford, resolved, instead of cancelling the bonds and obligations held by the conspirators, to redeem his losses by staking on that game his ready money against those liabilities. This was at first demurred to with much apparent earnestness by the winners; but Mr. Merton, warmly seconded by Sandford, insisting upon the concession, as he deemed it, it was finally agreed that *ecarte* should be the game by which he might hope to regain the fortune and the peace of mind he had so rashly squandered: the last time, should he be successful—and was he not sure of success?—he assured Sandford, that he would ever handle cards or dice. He should have heard the mocking merriment with which the gang heard Sandford repeat this resolution to mend his ways—*when* he had recovered back his wealth!

The day so eagerly longed for by Merton and the confederates—by the spoilers and their prey—arrived; and I waited with feverish anxiety the coming on of night. Only the chief conspirators—eight in number, were to be present: and no stranger except myself—a privilege I owed to the moonshine legacy I had just received—was to be admitted to this crowning triumph of successful fraud.—One only hint had I ventured to give Mr. Merton, and that under a promise, 'on his honor as a gentleman,' of inviolable secrecy. It was this:

'Be sure before commencing play to-morrow night, that the bonds and obligations you have signed, the jewels you have lost, with a sum in notes or gold to make up an equal amount to that which you mean to risk, is actually deposited on the table."

He promised to insist on this condition. It involved much more than he dreamt of.

My arrangements were at length thoroughly complete; and a few minutes past twelve o'clock the whispered password admitted me into the house. An angry altercation was going on. Mr. Merton was insisting, as I had advised, upon the exhibition of a sum equal to that which he had brought with him—for, confident of winning, he was determined to recover his losses to the last farthing; and although his bonds, bills, obligations, his sister's jewels, and a large amount in gold and genuine notes, were produced, there was still a heavy sum deficient.

"Ah, by-the-by," exclaimed Sandford as I entered, "Waters can lend you the sum for an hour or two—for a *consideration*," he added in a whisper. "It will soon be returned."

"No, thank you," I answered coldly. "I never part with my money till I have lost it."

A malignant scowl passed over the scoundrel's features; but he made no reply. Ultimately it was decided that one of the fraternity should be despatched in search of the required amount. He was gone about half an hour, and returned with a bundle of notes. They were, as I hoped and expected, forgeries on foreign banks. Mr. Merton looked at and counted them, and the play commenced.

As it went on, so vividly did the scene recall the evening that had sealed my own ruin, that I grew dizzy with excitement and drained tumbler after tumbler of water to allay the fevered throbbing of my veins. The gamblers were fortunately too much absorbed to heed my agitation. Merton lost continuously—without pause or intermission. The stakes were doubled—trebled—quadrupled! His brain was on fire; and he played, or rather lost, with the recklessness of a madman.

"Hark! what's that?" suddenly exclaimed Sandford, from whose satanic features the mask he had so long worn before Merton had been gradually slipping. "Did you not hear a noise below?"

My ear had caught the sound; and I could better interpret it than he. I ceased.

"Touch the signal-bell, Adolphe," added Sandford.

Not only the play, but the very breathing of the villains, was suspended as they listened for the reply.

It came. The answering tinkle sounded once—twice—thrice. "All right!" shouted Sandford. "Proceed!. The farce is nearly played out."

I had instructed the officers that two of them in plain clothes should present themselves at the front door, obtain admission by means of the password I had given them, and immediately seize and gag the door-keeper I had also acquainted them with the proper answer to the signal ring—three distinct pulls at the bell handle, communicating with the first floor. Their comrades were then to be admitted and they were all to silently ascend the stairs, and wait on the landing till summoned by me to enter and seize the gamesters. The back entrance to the house was also secured but unobtrusively watched.

One only fear disturbed me: it was lest the scoundrels should take alarm in sufficient time to extinguish the lights, destroy the forged papers, and possibly escape by some private passage which might, unknown to me, exist.

Rousing myself, as soon as the play was resumed, from the trance of memory by which I had been in some sort absorbed, and first ascertaining that the handles of my pistols were within easy reach—for I knew that I was playing a desperate game with desperate men—I rose, stepped carelessly to the door, partially opened it, and bent forward, as if listening for a repetition of the sound which had so alarmed the company. To my great delight the landing and stairs were filled with police officers—silent and stern as death. I drew back, and walked towards the table at which Mr Merton was seated. The last stake—an enormous one—was being played for. Merton lost. He sprang upon his feet, death pale, despairing, overwhelmed, and a hoarse execration surged through his clenched teeth. Sandford and his associates coolly raked the plunder together, their features lighted up with fiendish glee.

"Villain!—traitor!—miscreant!" shrieked Mr Merton, as if smitten with a sudden frenzy, and darting at Sandford's throat: "you, devil that you are, have undone, destroyed me!"

"No doubt of it," calmly replied Sandford, shaking off his victim's grasp; 'and I think it has been very artistically and effectually done too. Snivelling, my fine fellow, will scarcely help you much."

Mr Merton glared upon the taunting villain in speechless agony and rage.

"Not quite so fast, Cardon, if you please," I exclaimed, at the same time taking up a bundle of forged notes. "It does not appear to me that Mr. Merton has played against equal stakes, for unquestionably this paper is not genuine."

"Dog!" roared Sandford, "do you hold your life so cheap?" and he rushed towards me as if to seize the forged notes.

I was as quick as he, and the levelled tube of a pistol sharply arrested his eager onslaught. The entire gang gathered near us, flaming with excitement. Mr Merton looked bewilderedly from one to another, apparently scarcely conscious of what was passing around him.

"Wrench the papers from him!" screamed Sandford, recovering his energy. "Seize him—stab, strangle him!"

"Look to yourself, scoundrel!" I shouted with equal vehemence. "Your hour is come! Officers enter and do your duty!"

In an instant the room was filled with police; and surprised, panic-stricken, paralyzed, by the suddenness of the catastrophe, the gang were all secured without the slightest resistance, though most of them were armed, and marched off in custody.

Three—Sandford, or Cardon (but he had half a dozen *alias*es), one of them—were transported for life; the rest were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. My task was effectually accomplished. My superiors were pleased to express very warm commendation of the manner in which I had acquitted myself; and the first step in the promotion which ultimately led to my present service was soon afterwards conferred upon me. Mr Merton had his bonds, obligations, jewels, and money, restored to him; and, taught wisdom by terrible experience, never again entered a gaming house. Neither he nor his lady-mother was ungrateful for the service I had been fortunate enough to render them.

The Thugs of India.

Do you know what the Thugs of India are? Some of you do, of course; but to such as do not I will explain. The Thugs are an association of assassins and robbers which was at one time very extensive; but, thanks to the endeavors of the British authorities, the numbers are now greatly reduced, though the monsters are by no means exterminated. The origin of the *Thuggee* system is unknown, and though Hindoos and Mohammedans alike belong to it, yet its tutelary goddess, Bhowanee, or Kali, who is said to preside over sensual indulgence, robbery and death, belongs to the former faith Plunder did not seem to be the sole object of their work, but in murdering and robbing they followed the teachings of their religious faith, and of their gains one-third was always set apart for sacrifice to their deity. They were directed in all their proceedings by auguries supposed to be received from their goddess; and certain classes were exempt from their attacks. They would not murder a dancing girl a minstrel, a Sikh, a religious mendicant, nor a laboring mechanic; and they seldom murdered women except for their own safety. They usually travelled in large gangs, and were divided into three classes. First were the informers, or on-trappers, who found and laid out the work; second, the stranglers, or killers; and third, those who buried the victims. The pistol and knife were never used by them. They make no noise in their deadly work, and spill no blood; the usual mode of murder being that of strangulation, which is done by a simple handkerchief twisted and notted for the purpose. Sometimes, however, where the handkerchief could not be so favorably used, a smart tap upon the temple of the victim with a small hammer accomplished the purpose; and so systematic were they in all their operations that the graves were generally dug by the time the bodies had been stripped, and in an exceedingly short space of time the terrible crime has been perpetrated, and all traces thereof covered up. The destruction of human life thus accomplished may be judged by an admission made to Col. Taylor, at Saugor, by a Thug who had been admitted to testify. He confessed that he had been himself engaged in the murder of seven hundred and nineteen persons! In giving this startling item from the Thug's testimony, Taylor remarks that the existence of so strange and murderous a system can only be explained by the condition of India; the extreme timidity and apathy of its inhabitants, and their division into caste; the number of small native governments; the habit of dwelling in villages, divided by extensive uninhabited tracts; the vast amount of travelling in that commercial country, without navigable rivers or safe conveyances; and the murderous spirit of Hindoo fanaticism. Between the years 1831 and 1837 nearly four thousand Thugs were brought to justice. Some of them were executed; some were transported; and some were allowed to go free upon giving evidence for the State.

Huron Signal.

GODERICH, C. W., MAY 10, 1864.

TERRA INCOGNITA.

The United Counties of Huron and Bruce have long been, in a certain sense, an *unknown land* to the successive Governments of Canada. When there is money to be raised by way of revenue or otherwise for Provincial purposes, or when our instalments of interest on the Municipal Loan Fund debt comes due we are duly remembered at head-quarters, but when, on the contrary, that money has to be expended, we are so far West that we seldom or never receive the slightest attention. There is no necessity for argumentation on this point. The facts and figures of years all go to show that these important Counties have been most shamefully neglected by the Legislature of the country. Thousands upon thousands of dollars have been drawn away from us to build piers on the St. Lawrence, to construct new roads in other parts of the Province, and to be squandered in payment for political squabbling at the seat of Government, while we have been left to build our own harbors or allow them to rot, to foster our own commerce, and to bear burthens that should in all justice have been laid upon the shoulders of the public. No doubt the circumstances in connection with the first settlement of the County of Huron tended to initiate this indifferent policy. The Canada Company had most unfortunately obtained possession of a large portion of the soil, and took upon itself to build a harbor at Goderich and to open up a leading road to the older settlements, which it did, after a very slip-shod fashion. In the early days when application was made to Parliament for help in the way of Public Improvement, the answer was, "You are under the care of the Canada Company, and must look to it for assistance for years to come." Well, eventually, the land to a great extent went from under the power of the Company. What then was the excuse? Not certainly, that we possessed the much desired improvements, for there was not a decent harbor on the Canadian shore of Lake Huron from Sarnia to the Indian Peninsula. Goderich harbor was in a state of shameful dilapidation—the harbors of Bruce (the Canada Company was not in the way there) were in a like condition, and every other improvement was left to be made by the people themselves. In private conversation with influential ministers, the excuse for this sham-ful neglect public interests was that we were too far West to be taken into account, but the excuse made in public was that the Government of the day could not really spare money for public improvements in this far-off region. The fact is, the money of the Province was laid out principally in Lower Canada—paid to subsidise ocean steamers, to chiselling tug contractors on the Lower St. Lawrence, in large sums about Quebec and centralizing Montreal, sunk in the rock underlying Ottawa, and the moiety that *did* accrue to Upper Canada was expended wherever political influence could be best secured by its means. By the time this far West was reached the exchequer was empty and we were left in the lurch. When the Government *did*, after much pressing, turn its attention to our wants, it inflicted a wrong upon us more grievous if possible than its previous neglect.—Instead of the harbor of refuge which we were led to hope for, the Harbor of Goderich was handed over to the B. & L. H. Railway Company, without an attempt being made to discover whether the transaction was in accordance with the wishes of our representatives, or the interests of their constituents. There is cause for all this shameful neglect and studied wrong—*a very simple cause:* The eighty or *ninety* thousand inhabitants of Huron and Bruce have but one representative in the House of Assembly, and from the geographical situation of his constituency that *one* representative cannot hope to have what is called in the lobbies of the House, *a following*. He cannot rise in his place and say, "gentlemen, unless you redress the wrongs my people labor under, I will, with the assistance of my colleagues, *vote you out of power!*" Hence he is, comparatively speaking, powerless, and must remain so, until some equitable system of Representative Reform is effected. Great attention is paid to Ottawa, ministers of the Crown visit it, Commissions of inquiry are sent to it, promises of increased energy in the work of completing the public buildings are made, and why? *Simply because there are Ottawa members in the House*, slippery customers, whose votes *may* be influenced by such a course. And what is true with regard to Ottawa is equally true as regards any locality whose representative or representatives can secure a certain number of followers on a local question. In Legislation as in War, Right has frequently to succumb to the power of Might. But why should it be so? Why should the Provincial strong-box be open to one section and shut to another, when the representatives of the people are bound by virtue of their oaths to act impartially, and to serve the whole country as well as their own constituents? The grasping policy which teaches that honesty is *not* the best policy, and the motto of which is "The greatest possible good to *ourselves*, to the disadvantage of all others" is true to the selfish instincts of poor human nature, but in practice it is eminently calculated to corrupt the politics of any country under the sun. If that doctrine holds good, Mr James Dickson should take Cartier by the button and say, "Come now, Monsieur, I have said a few hard words about you, but you are not so bad after all. We may be of great service to each other just now. You would like first-rate to have an additional vote, and I would be equally pleased to get a good solid Government Grant for the purpose of building harbors on Lake Huron, and for other much-required improvements. You understand me, I will vote for you on certain conditions!" And yet, we rejoice to know that the rate-payers of this vast constituency have never yet hinted to their representatives that such a course would be agreeable to them. They have been sadly neglected, nay deeply wronged, but their very struggles with adverse circumstances have induced a feeling of manly independence which would disdain the perpetration of a wrong act to secure a *possible* good. Time *must* bring about some change. The vast disproportion of our representation compared with the area of country and the member of hard-working, tax-paying people represented must eventually lead to a better state of things. We fondly hope that it may not be long coming. The great leading facts we have adverted to above should be persistently pressed upon the attention of the legislature, until at last even centralizing selfishness would have to give way and accord to us at least a portion of the justice we feel ourselves entitled to.

But it may be said, why dwell upon these facts? They are so patent to the whole Province as to require no repetition. We are not so sure of that. There are many intelligent men throughout the country who have but a very vague idea with regard to these Counties. We will cite one example, which will be amply sufficient to illustrate what we mean. The Warden of the United Counties of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, Sidney Warner, Esq., a gentleman of education and intelligence, in his Address to the Council over which he presides at its meeting in January last, made use of the following words:—"When I first entered this Council in 1848, the Council numbered 15, we have now a membership of 35, *having the largest representation of "any United Counties in Canada West."* Now, although Mr. Sidney Warner has been a member of the Lennox and Addington Council for so many years, and should, perhaps, be better posted up, we believe he was perfectly sincere in making the above statement. What, then, will be his astonishment when we inform him that the *Terra Incognita* of Huron and Bruce has a representation of FIFTY-TWO! and that the represented now number NINETY-THOUSAND SOULS! And when he also learns that we have a soil second to none in the Province, in point of Agricultural resource, he will, we doubt not, agree with us, that a systematic neglect of our interests on the part of the Government of the Country is, on the highest public grounds, a cruel wrong.

It is currently reported that when the accession to power of the new ministry became known in England, it was resolved to recal a large number of the regular troops from the Province. The confidence reposed in the British character of the present Administration, and the certainty that under them a real system of provincial defence will be inaugurated, is the reason assigned for this step—this is complimentary but will hardly be considered satisfactory—we like the red coats and want them in our country even if we rarely see them—besides to the cities the army expenditure is of consequence, we hope that the rumor is incorrect.—*Bruce Vindicator.*

If it is so currently reported, we should like to be informed upon what authority, for we certainly never saw or heard of such a rumor before. Was it Colonel Tache's suggestion that the militia of the country should be taught to turn out at *the sound of the trumpet* that infused such confidence into the British War Office with regard to Canada, or was it a knowledge of the fact that Mr. Isaac Buchanan, at a great personal sacrifice, had laid his talents and his Republican ideas upon the alter of his country? It is all unadulterated bosh to talk about the British Government having more confidence in the character of the present Ministry than it bestowed upon that which preceded it. Where is there a single fact in connection with the Militia schemes of the Cartier-McDonald men to warrant such twaddle?

THE GREAT BATTLE.

The long-threatened advance of the Federal armies in Virginia began on Wednesday last. That a great two-days' battle was the result we know, but beyond this bare fact all is wrapped in mystery. A variety of extremely conflicting telegrams have reached us. First it was reported that Burnside had been routed by Longstreet; then, on Sunday, a rumor was put in circulation that the Confederates had been awfully beaten, Lee killed, and the whole army in full retreat for Richmond. These reports proved to be fabrications. Yesterday we applied for the regular Associated Press dispatch, but failed to get more than a meagre synopsis of the news contained in the dailies of yesterday morning. All we can gather is that there has been a wholesale destruction of human life, and that the battle, judging from Northern telegrams, was a drawn one. It will be a day or two before the real state of affairs leaks out. We were in hopes of being able to lay some additional telegraphic news before our readers to-day, but it seems that this is impossible, the Montreal office here only corresponding with Stratford instead of Brantford direct as formerly.

GRAND TRUNK.—The *Free Press* says that in consequence of the new arrangement the Grand Trunk is doing an immense business. Twenty-eight trains per day pass over the Western end of the road, and the rolling stock is so fully occupied that the local timber and stave trade between Sarnia and St. Marys is neglected.

QUEER QUERIES.—Ought a pair of trousers which have been obtained on credit to be legally regarded as breeches of trust? When a man happens to speak with a quiver in his voice, is it right to think his speech an arrow-minded one? Would a promissory note which is made payable at sight be a legal tender to an inmate of a blind asylum?

THE AMERICAN WAR.

GRANT'S ADVANCE.

The Two Days' Battle.

NEW YORK, May 6.—A special despatch to the *World*, dated headquarters of the army of the Potomac, May 4, 6 a. m, says:—The order to march was issued from Gen. Meade's headquarters yesterday morning, and was disseminated through the army by two p. m. Gen. Gregg's cavalry division, accompanied by a portion of the canvass pontoon train, moved yesterday afternoon towards Richardsville, and were engaged until late at night repairing the road to Ely's Ford. Soon after midnight that division moved to the ford named to establish a crossing. About midnight the 3rd cavalry division, with another portion of the canvass pontoon train, left for Germania Ford, five or six miles above there, to establish a crossing. It is reported at this hour that both efforts were successful.

The advance of the 2nd Corps, Maj. Gen. Hancock commanding, broke camp at midnight and moved down the Stevensburg and Richmondville road, toward Ely's Ford. The entire corps were on the march before three o'clock this morning in the same direction, and were expected to effect a crossing soon after daylight. The 5th Corps, under Maj. Gen. Warren, commenced moving at midnight. The advance consisting of two divisions of infantry and a portion of artillery passed through Stevensburg at midnight, closely followed by the remainder of the corps all marching towards Germania Ford. The 5th corps was closely succeeded by the 6th under Sedgwick, which quitted its camp at 4 a. m. Both the 5th and 6th corps are understood to be crossing the Rapidan at Germania Ford. The entire movement resolves itself into the crossing of the Rapidan now at two fords towards the right flank of the enemy, placing itself after crossing on a line nearly parallel with the river, between Orange Court House and Chancellorsville. At the present hour, the movement is under weigh, and there is a probability that it will be successfully accomplished without severe opposition by Lee, to whom this bold push must be more or less of surprise It is not probable that any serious engagement will be fought to-day. Cavalry skirmishing and artillery duelling are likely to make up the day's fighting unless the enemy contests the advances in force.

WASHINGTON, May 5—The *Word's* special says there is no doubt now from intelligence received from Beaufort station, that Lee has entirely abandoned his line on the Rapidan, and with his army, has taken the roads running from the south of that stream to Orange Springs, destined either for the entrenchments at Richmond or for a position at Hanover Court House There is no indication of a rebel movement into the valley of Virginia, and the fact of Lee's general retreat as he did formerly to Mine Run, an I beyond, seems thus clearly established.

NEW YORK, May 6.—The *World* says that the passengers who arrived in this city from Baltimore last night, state that information had been received there from Confederate sources, as well as from Norfolk and Fort Monroe, that Gen W F Smith, with a very large army, had disembarked on the south side of James river, not far from Fort Darling, on Drury's Bluff, as the Confederates call it. His object was, of course, a matter of mere speculation—it might be lent in order to distract the Confederates and prevent them sending reinforcements to Gen. Lee, but if it was in earnest it meant that Fort Darling and Petersburg were to be captured and Richmond cut off from railroad communication from North Carolina and the South. If the news is correct, and it is generally believed in Baltimore, the occupation of West Point last Monday was merely to deceive the enemy; still all is mere unauthenticated rumor, and Gen Smith's army may be detained for West Point to co-operate with the extreme left of Meade's army.

A special despatch to the *Times* says that Culpepper is being strongly fortified, and will be used as a depot for stores. It is reported here to-day that a strong column of troops under Couch and Siegel are marching from Winchester up the Shenandoah Valley as a co-operating column destined eventually to cut the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, while Butler's force or a part of it strikes the other railroad at or near Petersburg, thus severing all railroad communication between Richmond and the South.

Butler took the field in person at the head of the army of the peninsula yesterday, and his host is marshalled by such leaders as W. F. Smith, Gilmore, Ferry and Weitzel.

An immense fleet of transports and a strong squadron of monitors and gunboats will convey it up one of those broad rivers to the gates or back door of Richmond, and perhaps the iron clads may once more try the strength of the Confederate batteries that line the James, Pamunky and Rappahannock.

FORT MONROE, May 6.- The New York *Herald's* extra, 8 p. m., says:—"Our troops under Gen. Butler are in possession of Petersburg." The following is from the *Tribune's* extra:—"The Washington *Republican's* extra says that General Grant hurled his entire army against the Confederate army on Friday. Lee was driven three miles, leaving 3,000 killed and 10,000 wounded in our hands. Grant is master of the field. Lee is in full retreat. Gen. Grant is in hot pursuit. Everything is being done for the wounded that lies in the powe of the surgeons and ambulance corps."

FORT MONROE, May 7.—Port Royal papers of the 5th, state that Florida, Georgia and South Carolina, are nearly depleted of Confederate troops, who have been sent north to join Lee's army. A great female bread riot occurred in Savannah, on the 17th ult.

NEW YORK, May 7.—Private letters from Bull's Gap, Tenn. 27th ult., announce the destruction of the East Tennessee and Virginia railroad, from a distance of 15 miles. Every bridge and railroad tie in the whole extent was burned, and the road left in such a condition that it cannot be repaired for months.

WASHINGTON, May 7.—It was telegraphed hence by the Independent telegraph line, but refused by the other lines, doubtless for prudential reasons, that a great victory was achieved by Grant on Wednesday and Thursday, he driving the Confederates two and a half miles with innumerable loss, and that he was following up that victory on the following morning by an assault on the Confederate works.

The *Star* in noticing a similar state ment of our afternoon contemporary, remarks that we should be very glad to be able to confirm this news, but have to say, after diligent enquiry, we are satisfied that the government has received no such information, or any information of more decisive results than that furnished by the *Tribune's* despatch elsewhere. The fact that Gen Meade was able to stand the brunt of the Confederate onset with a portion of his command, is considered a hopeful indication, and we hope soon to be able to announce a decisive victory, but we shall not trifle with our readers by manufacturing bogus victories. The above contradiction of the *Star* is believed to be based on reliable information. During the day many enquiries were made of officers of the government, but without the satisfaction nat urally desired on the part of those who have impatient desires for early and complete success, and who forget that the work must be necessarily stubborn, heavy and persistent on both sides, owing to the great importance to each of the result.

The statements which were read here today and which are entitled to belief are, that Lee made a tremendous and violent attack to pierce our centre, hoping thereby to divide our forces and to secure a victory; but Hitchcock's corps came to the relief and amid a murderous fire formed in line of battle and thwarted the designs of the Confederates. The loss was heavy on both sides. General Sheridan who was profitably engaged in other parts of the field, sent the chief in command a message that he had routed Stuart's cavalry. The attack of Lee was on our advancing columns, and he doubtless anticipated a victory by his onslaught before the main body could advance to the field of battle. The appearances on Thursday were that hostilities would be renewed on Friday.

Intense excitement pervaded the city today in regard to the pending battle south of the Rapidan. No official information has been received. Various rumors and conjectural reports have been circulated. It is known positively only that a battle was begun on Thursday, in which our loss in killed and wounded was about 4,000, including several officers of distinction. It is understood that the Confederate army had been driven two miles back to their defences upon Mine Run. As yet the government has received no information whatever of the progress of affairs, except the common report that Grant has severed all connection with Washington, and pickets have been stationed to prevent the passage to the rear of any except his couriers.

It is expected that the telegraph line to the Rappahannock station will be placed in working order without delay. It is evident, from the accounts received, that Lee attempted to get between Grant's army and the fords of the Rapidan, but was foiled and compelled to abandon the attempt. Subsequently a furious attack was kept up upon our lines, which have steadily received the shock. One strong indication of the result is the melancholy aspect of the secession sympathisers.

NEW YORK, May 8.—The *Star* in its extra this morning says the only official information from the army is derived from despatches of the medical director and chief quartermaster to their respective bureaus.—The wounded, numbering from 6,000 to 8,000, have been sent from the battle-field to Rappahannock station, thence to be forwarded to Washington. A portion of them have arrived at Rappahannock.

The chief quartermaster has made a requisition for grain for the animals. This imports an advance by Gen. Grant. General Ingalls says we have fought two days, the enemy are said to be retiring. There seems to be no doubt that although nothing decisive has yet occurred the enemy has been foiled in his confident expectation of driving Gen. Grant back before his operations could be fully developed, that Lee has been compelled to give; the tactics of the enemy have uniformly been to strike his heaviest blow at the outset, and to this their success has always been owing. This has now failed.

The casualties reported are General Hays killed and Generals Getty and Gregg and Col. Hays and Gen. Owens wounded. General Hancock is reported to have received a slight wound while rallying his men to resist A. P. Hill's onset. Two of Gen. Burnside's staff are reported killed while carrying despatches.

Reports received from the front up to 11 o'clock on Saturday morning say there had been two days' severe fighting on Thursday and Friday, and it was believed that the enemy were retreating and our wounded were being sent to the rear, showing that we had lost no ground in the fighting. It is believed our forces were pressing forward. Nothing further has been heard from Gen. Butler.

Reports from Chattanooga, dated 5 o'clock yesterday P. M., says that Sherman was then at Tunnel Hill.

The enemy at Buzzard Roost Gap and our Gen. McPherson was operating against the enemy's communications with Rome, through Resaca.

Old Sherman has gone to the front to give Joe Johnson a "final hearing."

The *Star* says were we at liberty to mention facts within our knowledge, we think we could demonstrate that Lee has real occasion to dread the strategy of our military operations, as well as the vigor with which they are pushed. We believe that Jeff. Davis finds to-day, in reality, what has sometimes been talked about—that it thunders all around. The line of attack by Lee in the fighting of Thursday and Friday, nearly at right angles with Grant's line of advance, and from the direction of Orange Court House, indicate that Lee made the latter point his base and headquarters. The forced march of a day and night by Burnside from Manassas, by which he got his troops to Grant's support on Thursday night, is said to have even surpassed his brilliant forced marches in East Tennessee, by which he surprised the enemy there.—Probably Lee has by this time had occasion to feel their presence with Grant.

General Webb was killed in the battle of Friday. Our loss is stated at 6,000 to 8,000 killed and wounded.

BALTIMORE, May 8.—The Fortress Monroe boat, which arrived this morning, brought no letter from the press agent, and nothing except vague rumors can be learned from Gen. Butler's army.

☞ The Edinburgh correspondent of a northern contemporary gives the following gassip about Prince Alfred, who has just left that city:—

"Whether or not it is true that Prince Alfred, as Lord Brougham remarked at the late Social Congress, is one of the best of princes, he has become an immense favourite among the Modern Athenians, some of whom have gone the length of seeking locks of his hair from the barber who usually had the honor of cropping his Royal Highness. Like his elder brother the Prince is a heavy smoker. Nothing, in fact, seems to please him better than a good pipe of tobacco and a chat with two or three cheerful companions. He is also of a mechanical cast of mind, and in his smoking room at Holyrood he has fitted up a turning lathe. In photography he is remarkably proficient, having imbibed a strong relish for it from his mother, who is known to be practically conversant with the art, and to have instructed her family in its details. His Royal Highness is equally expert on the violin and harmonium. One incident illustrating a highly favorable trait of the Prince's character must not be omitted. Some time ago, as will be remembered, one of his eyes was accidentally blackened while he was playing at racket The poor fellow who threw the ball manifested extreme, and no doubt, sincere sorrow for the occurrence, but his despondency gave way to hearty admiration when the Prince good humoredly asked him to dinner at Holyrood Palace next day, in order to lighten the tedium of his temporary imprisonment.

AN ENTHUSIASTIC CURLER.—A veteran curler of seventy, belonging to a club in a Highland district, last year was so well pleased with his day's play in a match, that he went home and arranged the tea cups on the table in the same position as the stones were in a famous shot he took during the game. 'Noo, gude-wife, look at this:' and hurling the teapot up the table, he smashed the cups.

'Dear me, Donald, ye have broken a' the cups.'

'Never mind, wife, I have tane the stane.—*Dundee Advertiser.*

Mrs. Henry Grattan Guinness, wife of the well-known preacher, recently delivered a sermon in the Friends' Meeting House in Cecil street, Limerick, Ireland, to a dense and highly respectable congregation, consisting exclusively of ladies. The house was crowded.—The preacher took her text from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, viii. 4, and spoke with great volubility and animation for nearly an hour.

MEXICAN AFFAIRS.—The Emperor and Empress of Mexico left Rome on the 20th ultimo for Civita Vecchia, to embark for Mexico. They had an audience of the Pope on the 19th, and his holiness returned the visit. They attended mass at the Vatican before leaving.

Town & Counties.

☞ See adv. of Messrs. Smaill & Thomson, Important Sale of Furniture, &c. Hotel-keepers will find this a good opportunity of securing articles in their line.

☞ THE SUNDAY SCHOOL DIAL, an admirable little paper for children, has been forwarded to us from Toronto, where it is now published.

☞ To render our Military notice of last Tuesday complete, we should have mentioned that J. Y. S. Kirk, Esq., of Goderich, received a certificate as Lieutenant, and that the Huron Rifles received honorable mention for discipline and general efficiency.

☞ We would direct attention to the advertisement in another column of the Accidents' Insurance Company. In this age of Railways, such an institution, if properly sustained, should be a great public benefit. This is the only Company of the kind, we believe, in Canada, or on the American Continent.

Presentation to Sergeant McLean.

The Rifle Company, last evening, after drill, presented Color-Sergt. McLean with a purse of $25.00 as a small token of their appreciation of his valuable services as a drill-instructor. The gallant Sergeant is worthy of all the respect felt towards him by the military and civilians of Goderich.

EMIGRANTS.—The steamer *Bruce* bro't down last night about 150 emigrants from the townships of Bruce and Huron. They are bound for Sarnia and thence by propeller to the Bruce Mines, to which their passage has been paid by those who seek their labor. Several of them have rented their farms in Bruce for the purpose of getting away. Judging from appearances, the loss sustained by the County will be only a numerical one.

☞ THE WEATHER.—Still another change. Yesterday was summer-like, the wind was from the sunny South, and the unclouded sun shone down upon a smiling earth; light garments were donned, delicate ladies ventured out, and thrifty housewives endeavored to impress upon their better-halves the necessity of moving kitchen stoves into out-door cook sheds.—About ten o'clock last night, however, rain began to fall, and it continued to descend in torrents all night, flooding streets and giving to the face of nature a most gloomy aspect. This forenoon was quite cold, the continuous drizzling rain being occasionally relieved by showers of *snow*. The spring prospects for these Counties are certainly dreary enough, but things may turn out better than most of us anticipate. It is best to hope on patiently.

PERSONAL.—Frederick Knell, Esq., of Zurich, a gentleman well-known and highly respected throughout the County, departs to-day for his native country, Switzerland, with the intention, we under stand, of remaining for some time, if not for an indefinite period. The loss of Mr. Knell's hearty greeting and genial cordiality will be felt by every one connected with the County Council, but still more by the people of the Township of Hay, whom he has served most efficiently in a municipal and magisterial capacity for many years. While we wish our old friend a prosperous voyage and pleasant sojourn in the loved land of his nativity, we trust he will not forsake us altogether.

COURT OF CHANCERY.—Vice Chancellor Esten will hold a court for the examination of witnesses and the hearing of causes at Goderich, on Friday, 13th May, instant. The following causes have been set down with the Deputy Registrar:

Gormley *vs.* Coleman, Lizars & MacFarlane, Davison & Toms.

Grace *vs.* Macdermott, Blake,—Davison & Toms.

Crabb *vs.* Dickenson, Davison & Toms, —Crooks.

Gordon *vs.* Fisher, Davison & Toms, —Macara.

Hope *vs.* Templeton, Mackenzie,—Davison & Toms.

Gooding *vs.* McDonald, Macara,—Cameron & Moss.

McNab *vs.* Morrison, Macara, Morphy.

Hogan *vs.* Moran, McKeowen,—Davison & Toms.

THE ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY.

The advertisement of this Company will be found in another column, and it speaks for itself as to the various properties sought for in such Institutions. Every man in insuring his property, or in making a provision for the future by obtaining a Policy of Insurance upon his life, seeks in the Company with which he does business prompt and honorable fulfilment of their contract when those circumstances occur which are sought to be provided against; and still further, they seek in the present stability and prosperity of the Company a guarantee that the honor shall not merely be a state of feeling, but a mercantile ability, as well as an unflinching determination to do what is just in every circumstance.

In addition to the high name of the Royal, we would ask our friends to examine the list of first class men, both in Britain and in Canada, which constitutes its Boards of Directors. This list will be found in the handsome Almanac published by the Company, for