

Altogether this has been one of the most serious disasters that has happened in the annals of Mississippi steamboats; there being at least one hundred and fifty families deprived by it of some dear and beloved member; over one hundred beings hurried by it out of time into eternity, with scarce a moment's warning. And amongst those who are saved, many are said to be severely burnt, some so much so that their recovery is very doubtful.

We understand that three different explosions took place on board the boat whilst burning—first, barrels of whiskey, brandy &c., then the boilers blew up with a fearful explosion, and lastly, thirty-nine barrels of gunpowder exploded, which strewed the surface of the river with fragments.

A large quantity of specie was in the boat on its way to the Tennessee banks, which was lost; one gentleman placed his pocket book containing \$38,000 under his pillow, and, though he escaped with life, he lost all his money. A great many more persons on board had very large amounts of money with them, the most, or all, of which, in the confusion, was lost.

N. B. We have since learned that the four left at fort Adams are Messrs. James P. Wilkinson, G. Stanfield, Gamble and his son. Mr. Francis was burnt to death.

#### MARYLAND REFORM CONVENTION.

*To the members of the democratic reform convention.*

When the 4th Monday of May was fixed for the meeting of the convention, it was designed to give time to ascertain, whether a reform of our constitution could be had by the action of the legislature, or whether it would be necessary to invoke the inherent sovereignty of the people to accomplish that object. Since the adjournment of the convention was made, the legislature, coerced by the state of public feeling produced and manifested by the patriotic course pursued by the nineteen reform electors, have passed laws, making many of the desired changes in the constitution. The people are given the power of electing their governor; it is true there is a local restriction in it which is the result of the petty sectional jealousy, which never ought to be seen in the forming of a constitution of a state; still the change is greatly preferable to the present aristocratic mode of appointing that officer. The election of the senate is given to the people, and some modification in the house of delegates is made, which approaches something nearer republican principles than the old system.

In relation to the judiciary nothing has been done, although perhaps no feature in our government is more defective. No state in the union has so cumbersome, expensive and ill-arranged a judiciary.—Besides the tenure for life, which ought not to be tolerated, we have in proportion to our population and extent of territory an extraordinary redundancy of judges; to show the overburdened and expensive character of our judiciary, as compared with that of other states, I have annexed a table made up from the most authentic sources, showing the square miles of territory, the population, number of judges and aggregate amount of salaries paid in the principle states of the union. A glance at this table will show, that for expense and number in our judiciary, we are pre-eminent, without so far as we can learn, any equivalent in the superior learning and accuracy of our courts.

The election of the clerks and registers by the people for a limited term, is a reform extensively desired in order to produce a salutary responsibility in these functionaries, and to prevent these offices from being distributed by the aristocracy to their favorites without reference to the wishes of the people. The last legislature has refused to grant this reform, nor, is there any reasonable ground for hope, that the present senate will concede to the people their just authority in the appointment of registers and clerks. These offices seem to attract the especial guardianship of the aristocracy.

The short time which has elapsed since the legislature closed its session and the laws not having been distributed, full opportunity has not been had to consider of the effect of the reforms passed by the legislature; and in order that full time and means for determining what has been done in the way of legislation, I have deemed it expedient; to further adjourn the meeting of the convention till the **FOURTH MONDAY OF JULY** next, when, it is hoped, all the members will attend at Baltimore; and it is earnestly recommended to those counties and districts, which have not selected members to do so, in time to be represented in the convention.

The importance of energetic action on the part of the reformers must be apparent. The reforms passed by the legislature are inoperative till confirmed by the next session; and when we reflect that these reforms have been reluctantly extorted by the pub-

lic excitement on that subject, it is obvious that supineness on our part would enable those hostile to change, to defeat the confirmation of what has been done.

The convention, at its meeting, will determine whether it is expedient to await the movements of the legislature or whether the inherent powers of the people shall be resorted to, for the purpose of modeling their institutions; if the former course should be adopted, zealous and energetic measures should be recommended to secure the election of a house of delegates favorable to reform.

CHARLES S. SEWELL.  
*President of the reform convention.*