

Virginia City Territorial Enterprise
January 10, 1863

Local Column

THE SANITARY BALL—The Sanitary Ball at La Plata Hall on Thursday night [January 8, 1863] was a very marked success, and proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, the correctness of our theory, that ladies never fail in undertakings of this kind. If there had been about two dozen more people there, the house would have been crowded—as it was, there was room enough on the floor for the dancers, without trespassing on their neighbors' corns. Several of those long, trailing dresses, even, were under fire in the thickest of the fight for six hours, and came out as free from rips and rents as they were when they went in.

Not all of them, though. We recollect a circumstance in point. We had just finished executing one of those inscrutable figures of the plain quadrille; we were feeling unusually comfortable, because we had gone through the performance as well as anybody could have done it, except that we had wandered a little toward the last; in fact we had wandered out of our own and into somebody else's set—but that was a matter of small consequence, as the new locality was as good as the old one, and we were used to that sort of thing anyhow.

We were feeling comfortable, and we had assumed an attitude—we have a sort of talent for posturing—a pensive attitude, copied from the Colossus of Rhodes—when the ladies were ordered to the centre. Two of them got there, and the other two moved off gallantly, but they failed to make the connection. They suddenly broached to under full headway, and there was a sound of parting canvas. Their dresses were anchored under our boots, you know. It was unfortunate, but it could not be helped.

Those two beautiful pink dresses let go amidships, and remained in a ripped and damaged condition to the end of the ball. We did not apologize, because our presence of mind happened to be absent at the very moment that we had the greatest need of it. But we beg permission to do so now.

An excellent supper was served in the large dining room of the new What Cheer House on B street. We missed it there, somewhat. We were not accompanied by a lady, and consequently we were not eligible to a seat at the first table. We found out all about that at the Gold Hill ball, and we had intended to be all prepared for this one.

We engaged a good many young ladies last Tuesday to go with us, thinking that out of the lot we should certainly be able to secure one, at the appointed time, but they all seemed to have got a little angry about something—nobody knows what, for the ways of women are past finding out. They told us we had better go and invite a thousand girls to go to the ball. A thousand. Why, it was absurd. We had no use for a thousand girls. A thou—but those girls were as crazy as loons. In every instance, after they had uttered that pointless suggestion, they marched magnificently out of their parlors—and if you will believe us, not one of them ever recollected to come back again.

Why, it was the most unaccountable experience we ever heard of. We never enjoyed so much solitude in so many different places, in one evening before. But patience has its limits; we finally got tired of that arrangement—and at the risk of offending some of those girls, we stalked off to the Sanitary Ball alone without a virgin, out of that whole litter. We may have done wrong—we probably did do wrong to disappoint those fellows in that kind of style—but how could we help it? We couldn't stand the temperature of those parlors more than an hour at a time: it was cold enough to freeze out the heaviest stock-holder on the Gould & Curry's books.

However, as we remarked before, everybody spoke highly of the supper, and we believe they meant what they said. We are unable to say anything in the matter from personal knowledge, except that the tables were arranged with excellent taste, and more than abundantly supplied, and everything looked very beautiful, and very inviting, also; but then we had absorbed so much cold weather in those parlors, and had had so much trouble with those girls, that we had no appetite left. We only eat a boiled ham and some pies, and went back to the ball room. There were some very handsome cakes on the tables, manufactured by Mr. Slade, and decorated with patriotic mottoes, done in fancy icing. All those who were happy that evening, agree that the supper was superb.

After supper the dancing was jolly. They kept it up till four in the morning, and the guests enjoyed themselves excessively. All the dances were performed, and the bill of fare wound up with a new style of plain quadrille called a medley, which involved the whole list. It involved us also. But we got out again—and we staid out, with great sagacity.

But speaking of plain quadrilles reminds us of another new one—the Virginia reel. We found it a very easy matter to dance it, as long as we had thirty or forty lookers-on to prompt us. The dancers were formed in two long ranks, facing each other, and the battle opens with some light skirmishing between the pickets, which is gradually resolved into a general engagement along the whole line: after that, you have nothing to do but stand by and grab every lady that drifts within reach of you, and swing her. It is very entertaining, and elaborately scientific also; but we observed that with a partner who had danced it before, we were able to perform it rather better than the balance of the guests.

Altogether, the Sanitary Ball was a remarkably pleasant party, and we are glad that such was the case—for it is a very uncomfortable task to be obliged to say harsh things about entertainments of this kind. At the present writing we cannot say what the net proceeds of the ball will amount to, but they will doubtless reach quite a respectable figure—say \$400.

DUE NOTICE—Moralists and philosophers have adjudged those who throw temptation in the way of the erring, equally guilty with those who are thereby led into evil; and we therefore hold the man who suffers that turkey at large just back of our office as culpable as our self, if some day that fowl is no longer perceptible to human vision.

The Czar of Russia never cast his eye on the minarets of Byzantium half as longingly as we gaze on that old gobbler. Turkey stuffed with oysters is our weakness—our mouth waters at the recollection of sundry repasts of that character—and this bird aforementioned appears to us to have an astonishing capacity for oyster-stuffing. Wonder if those fresh oysters at Almack's are all gone? We grow ravenous—pangs of hunger gnaw our vitals—if to-morrow's setting sun gleams on the living form of that turkey, we yield our reputation for strategy.

THE NEW COURT HOUSE—Messrs. Unger & Denninger's new brick house, on B street, has been leased by the County Commissioners for court rooms and offices. The first floor,

we believe, is to be used for a United States District Court room, and the second story will be partitioned into offices and a Probate Court room. It would probably have been better to have reversed this order of things, on account of the superior light and the freedom from dust and noise afforded by the upper story; yet it is possible that these advantages may be as necessary in one case as the other—we do not care about dictating much in the matter so long as no one will be likely to pay us for it.

But nevertheless, since the first story is to be used for the District Court, we wish to suggest that that box, that partition, be removed, and the whole of it set apart for that purpose. It would then be a large, handsome and well-lighted hall, whereas, in its present shape, it is not very greatly superior to the present court room on C street. A gentleman informed us yesterday that he thought the intention was to remove the partition, but he could not be positive about it.

THE MUSIC.—Millington & McCluskey's band furnished the music for the Sanitary Ball on Thursday night, and also for the Odd Fellows' Ball the other evening in Gold Hill, and the excellence of the article was only equalled by the industry and perseverance of the performers. We consider that the man who can fiddle all through one of those Virginia Reels without losing his grip, may be depended upon in any kind of musical emergency.