tic.@@' Owing to the numerous and fatal accidents that have befallen steam-vessels in the United States, the subject was early investigated, under the directions of Congress, when ample information was obtained from every part of the Union respecting the causes and consequences of these casualties. A stringent enactment had been previously passed by this active and energetic government, ordaining, under heavy penalties, increased caution in the manage­ment of this craft; frequent examinations, by qualified persons, of the nature and strength of the machinery ; and prosecutions against the officers and owners for injuries to life and property; thus evincing that vigilance and laudable anxiety for the public safety which so well merits the con­fidence of the people. Another law, it is expected, will follow, providing for the employment of careful and skilful engineers.

Those accidents that have occurred to steam-vessels are computed to have amounted to 260 ; ninety-nine occasion­ed by explosions of the boilers, or the bursting of some part of the engines, or by collapses; twenty-five by shipwreck from collision, gales, &c.; twenty-eight by fire; fifty-two by snags or sawyers, which are trees that, having been swept away by floods, have, in their course down the river, stuck in the bottom, and there remain, moving up and down, and have, from the resemblance of their motion to sawyers, received that name. They are extremely dangerous to vessels that run against them. Different and unknown causes have occasioned the loss of twenty-four steam-ves­sels. “ The general impression,” says the secretary at war in his letter, “ is, that a great part of the boats destroyed by explosions, as well as many lost by fire and other acci­dents, would have been saved by proper experience, science, and attention, on the part of the engineers and comman­ders.” Such accidents are in all cases occasioned by ig­norance or carelessness ; and it is highly necessary that the agency of steam, as it is so powerful and useful, should be also rendered comfortable and safe. This has not been the case in America; and the frequent explosions which have occurred with loss of life, give an impression of reck­lessness and mismanagement, highly disgraceful to those in the immediate charge. In this country such evils could not have continued so long. They would have been put down by the scandal which they would have excited, even by the force of public opinion, without the aid of laws.@@2 The number of lives lost in these various accidents is differently stated. The lowest amount is stated at 2000 ; though, ac­cording to other accounts, it is double or triple. The se­cretary to the treasury states that be had been able to as­certain 1676 killed and 443 wounded in steam-boats. By the sinking of a vessel on the Mississippi in 1837, 300 lives were lost, which is the greatest number by any one accident. By the explosion of a vessel on the same river in 1838, 130 lives were lost, and 120 by that of another on the Ohio. By the burning of a vessel on the Mississippi in 1837, 130 persons perished; and 100 by shipwreck in the same year on the North Carolina shore. The loss of pro­perty from the same cause is estimated at between five and six millions of dollars.

The internal intercourse of the United States has been wonderfully improved by the construction of canals, which fill up the blanks left by nature in the water communica­tions of the country, and more recently by railroads, which now intersect the American territory in all directions. Plans of improvement, which, when they were proposed, were regarded as visionary, have been actually executed, and have far outstript the most sanguine hopes of their pro­jectors. Capital to a prodigious amount has been laid out on these improvements, which have already produced, and are destined to produce still more, mighty changes in the in­ternal intercourse and genera) aspect of the world. In a lew years they will connect the St Lawrence with the Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic with the Mississippi. Nor need we wonder if we yet see the railroad car speeding its course, on wings of fire, from New York, along the great table-land of New Spain, to Mexico. The following ac­count of the canal navigation of the United States is abridg­ed from Mitchell’s Compendium of the internal Improve­ments of the country.

*Maine.—*The only canal of any importance in this state is Cumberland and Oxford Canal, which extends from Portland to Sebago Pond. By means of a lock constructed in Songo river, it is connected with Brandy and Long Ponds, and comprehends a water communication, natural and artificial, of about fifty miles in extent. It was completed in 1829, at an expense of 250,000 dollars.

*New* *Hampshire.—*The internal improvements in this state consist of a series of short canals, constructed on the Merrimack river, for the improvement of its naviga­tion, by means of which, and the Middlesex Canal, Boston is connected with the interior of New Hampshire.

*Vermont.—*There are several short canals constructed in this state on the western bank of the Connecticut river, in­tended principally for improving the navigation of that river.

*Massachusetts.—*The Middlesex Canal, in connection with those in New Hampshire, opens a water-communication be­tween Boston and the interior parts of that state. It con­nects the Merrimack river with Boston harbour, and extends from Charlestown, opposite Boston, to Chelmsford, twenty- seven miles. It was completed in 1808, at an expense of 528,00 dollars. The Blackstone Canal commences at Wor­cester, Massachusetts, and extends to Providence, Rhode Island. It was completed in 1828, at an expense of 600,000 dollars. The Hampshire and Hampden Canal, uniting with the Farmington Canal at Southwick, and extending thence to Northampton, twenty miles, connects the Connecticut river with New Haven harbour. The entire distance is seventy- eight miles. It was commenced in 1825, and finished at an expense of 600,000 dollars. There are other two canals, constructed for passing two fulls in the Connecticut river.

*Connecticut.—*The Farmington Canal, in Connecticut, commences at New Haven, and passes through the state fifty-eight miles, to its northern boundary, where it is con­nected with the Hampshire and Hampden Canal in Mas­sachusetts.

*New York.—*The Erie Canal is by far the most important work of the kind in the United States, or indeed in the world. It was commenced in 1817, and completed in 1825. It unites the Hudson with Lake Erie, extending from Albany, on that river, to Buffalo on Lake Erie, a distance of 363 miles, with a width at the bottom of twenty-eight feet, at the surface of forty feet, and a depth of water of four feet. The number of locks is eighty-four, and the rise and fall 698 feet. This great work was begun without any sanguine hopes of success, and was generally pronounced to be vain

@@@, See Letter of the Secretary of the Treasury to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, December 12. 1838, p. 11.

@@@S It appears that a prejudice bad arisen in favour of copper boilers, which, as copper is inferior to iron in tenacity, were not so safe. But one of the proprietors or managers of steam-boats said it was impossible to disabuse the people of this error ; and that unless the, used a boiler of this metal, a vessel would be built, and provided with a copper boiler, and run against them. So, this person adds, in a tone of reckless levity that cannot be too sev, rely reprobated, “ we have concluded, therefore, to give them a copper boiler, the strongest of its class, and have made up our minds that they have a perfect right to be scalded by copper boilers if they insist on it. ’ “ I lament to add," says

Wm. C. Redfield, the writer of the excellent letter to the secretary to the treasury, in which this anecdote is given, “that the exercise of this \* right’ to the use of copper was attended, within a few years, with a fearful destruction of life, as bad been foretold.”