

bute as much to the benefit of Richmond as any one of her public works. It is true his object is not to benefit the city, but that will be the result; and if recent observations are correct, he has nearly concluded his job.

It is reported to us that he is sinking a ditch fifty feet deep and fifty broad, and that in two or three weeks, at most, it will be completed. As we have said, this will shorten the river and benefit the city. As a step in the siege of Richmond, we think it very doubtful whether it secures to its authors any of the advantages they expect to derive from it. Were they permitted to sail their monitors through it without opposition, they would be brought nearer Fort Drewry and Chaffin's Bluff, and would avoid the obstructions they themselves have sunk in Trent's Reach; but they will meet with opposition, and that of so determined a character that we feel authorized in believing the grand canal destined to prove as unprofitable to them as the grand mine at Petersburg. It is not advisable to say more on this subject at present.— When Butler shall complete his canal and attempt to navigate it, he will find out how we propose to confront him. But the feasibility of making this canal once demonstrated, the lesson will not be lost upon the citizens of Richmond, and with the return of peace and commerce, they will reap the benefits of the lesson taught them by Butler, the Beast.

BUTLER'S CANAL.

Between twenty and thirty years ago, when Richmond first began to look up as a place of trade and importance, several schemes were mooted for improving the navigation of James river. Prominent among these was the plan of cutting a canal across Dutch Gap, and thereby shortening the river some fifteen miles. Several of the leading citizens of that day, being constituted into a committee, visited Dutch Gap in company with a scientific engineer, and, having made due inspection and survey of the ground, came back with the report that the scheme was impracticable for a large number of reasons, all of which were duly set forth and elaborated. The people were convinced by the learned arguments advanced that Dutch Gap could not be cut through, and all thought of such a thing was given up. Vessels and steamers, in coming to or going from Richmond, made the long voyage round the peninsula, of which Dutch Gap is the isthmus. Though a whole day was sometimes lost in the trip round, owners of vessels and merchants, believing the evil irremediable, did not complain.

All this was old Virginia-like, and but for this war and the siege of Richmond, the probability is that the question of the practicability of cutting through Dutch Gap would never again have attracted the attention of the public. But now the scheme is not only brought forward, but is actually being put into execution by the Yankee General Butler. With fifteen hundred or two thousand Virginia negroes he is cutting a ship canal through Dutch Gap, which is destined to contri-