

MODERN ASTRONOMY.

Messrs. Editors: I have just been reading the 47th number of the North American Review, and, among other able and interesting articles, I have been particularly impressed with the one on Modern Astronomy. It is, indeed, a most learned and masterly sketch of the most abstruse, and difficult and perfect of the sciences—a compendium of the vast and various labors of the Newtons and Herschels of modern times. The great inventions and discoveries, by which the science has advanced to its present highly improved state, are presented in bold relief before us, and discussed in a manner that shows a most intimate acquaintance with the subject, in all its extent and depth, details and bearings. The merits of different observers, of different observations, instruments, and instrument makers, are touched upon, the most curious and striking results are gleaned out of the huge mass of materials, with which this department of the science is encumbered. The successive steps and laborious processes, by which astronomical tables have been improved, and the degree of perfection to which they are now brought, are clearly traced and exemplified. The new fields brought to light by the telescope are glanced at, with reference to the modifications growing out of this accession to the system.

But what the author of this article seems to dwell upon with peculiar satisfaction, is the progress of the calculus, as connected with the development and establishment of the theory of gravity. Here we are introduced to those master spirits, whose course has been so far above the ken of ungifted mortals, and who have hitherto had so little converse with the nether world. Their respective claims are weighed and adjusted as freely and fairly as they are authoritatively. We are accustomed to hear only the most unqualified praise of such men as Newton and Laplace. One example from a high authority, will serve as a specimen. "It is in vain that we search every corner of the Newtonian writings for some trifling proof, that their author was, like ourselves, liable to common intellectual failings of the species"—Edinburgh Review, vol. iii. p. 5. In the article under consideration, Newton, and those who have moved in the same elevated sphere, assume the character of fallible beings of this earth; their methods and results are subjected to criticism, and the sound and the true are separated from the unsound and the erroneous. Their high speculations, moreover, are placed before us without pretension, without a word of triumph, or self-gratulation, and without betraying the consciousness of having done any thing remarkable. And yet there is an air of familiarity with the subject, and a tone of deep conviction, not to be assumed or mistaken, and which does not permit us to doubt, for a moment, that he who thus pronounces judgment in matters of such high importance, is well aware what he is about; that he stands on firm ground; that he has measured his strength with those gigantic minds, to whose powers he ventures to fix the limit, and that, though some of the parties are still living, there will be no appeal from this decision.

We are often reminded in reading this article, of the reported conversations of Bonaparte, in which he discusses the politics of Europe; descants upon the momentous events of the Revolution; stamps, by a sentence or a word, the character of some great Marshal or great Minister, or a great battle; passing by, as scarcely worthy of his notice, second rate heroes, and statesmen, and transactions.

The only regret of the reader is, that the person who could write this, did not write more; that the profound author has not given us his notes, discoveries and reflections, at large; instead of this rapid and condensed outline. Were the public and the world thus favored, this article exhibits abundant proof that it would be equally an honor to our country and to the age.

Of those who are in any degree acquainted with the subject, few need be informed, that there is but one individual on this side of the water, and an extremely limited number on the other, who would assume such a responsibility as that of which we have spoken. Our nation is now just completing its fiftieth year. We are allowed, by both hemispheres, to have produced, one General, the Father of his country; one Philosopher, Franklin; we may now boast without ostentation, of one Geometer, BOWDITCH, of the same high intellectual order.—Nat. Intell.

A Nice Point of Law.—Blackstone, speaking of the right of a wife to a dower, asserts, that if land abide in the husband for a single moment, the wife shall be endowed thereof; and he adds that this doctrine was extended very far by a Jury in Wales where the father and son were both hanged in one cart; but the son was supposed to have survived the father, by appearing to struggle the longest, whereby he became seized of an estate by survivorship; in consequence of which seizen his widow obtained a verdict for her dower.

FOREIGN.

LATEST FROM ENGLAND.

NEW-YORK, APRIL 28.—The ships Bolena and Sabina, arrived at this port last evening, from Liverpool, whence they sailed on the 30th. By this arrival, London papers to the 28th have been received.

The leading articles of interest are the motions of Mr. Huskisson, in the House of Commons, in regard to the Colonial Trade, and for a reduction of duties on foreign articles now prohibited in England. The first of these projects was brought forward on the 21st of March.

On the 25th of March, Mr. H. moved a series of resolutions, the object of which is to remove the existing prohibitory duties. He proposes to reduce the duty on foreign cotton manufactures imported, to ten per cent; on woollens to 15 per cent; on linens, to 25 per cent; on foreign books, per lb., sixpence; on paper, to three pence; on white bottles, to 18 pence; earthen and Chinaware, to 1 per cent; on foreign Iron, to thirty shillings per ton; on foreign copper, to 27l. per ton. With respect to the Corn Laws, the ministry yet preserve silence.

Charles Richard Vaughan, Esq. is appointed Minister Plenipotentiary, and Envoy Extraordinary from the British Government to the United States.

Reports of various kinds were in circulation respecting the mission of Mr. Stratford Canning to St. Petersburg. One paper announces his arrival in London, after having terminated his mission successfully. Another paper says, "he is about to return home, having wholly succeeded in his mission to St. Petersburg, which related solely to the adjustment of the differences between Russia and the United States, on the subject of the navigation of the Pacific Ocean." A third paper states, that after the arrangement of the specific object of the mission, "Mr. Canning introduced the question of Greek politics; but the Russian minister not finding the discussion of this subject included in the bond, declined entering upon any topic not expressly committed to him to negotiate with the English Envoy.—Lord Stratford will become the resident ambassador at that Court."

A fourth paper gives an absolute contradiction to the reports that that part of his mission respecting the Greeks had been frustrated, and adds that the negotiations are proceeding in the most friendly manner, and are expected to be concluded with perfect satisfaction to all the parties concerned.

"We suspect," continues the editor, "that those reports formed the dernier resort of the cabal who have conspired to depress the value of Greek Scrip."

The general aspect of affairs, however, must now defeat the projects of this confederacy. The confirmation of the surrender of Patras, received last night in the French papers, is of great importance. No rational doubt can be entertained of the establishment of the independence of Greece." The conclusion from these conflicting statements is, that none of them knew any thing about the matter.

It is reported that Portugal has acknowledged the independence of Brazil. The price for which the Brazilian State is said to have consented to pay for the diplomatic recognition of that of which it already had the actual possession, is a million and a half, now in the hands of the contractors for the loan originally intended for Brazil.

The Emperor of Russia had issued two proclamations; one convoking the estates of the kingdom of Poland, in which his Imperial Majesty admonishes the Senators and Deputies not to follow the examples of the Diet of 1820, which, he says, spent its time in continual and useless debates; and the other effectually remedying the evil of which he complains, by excluding the public from its debates.

The pacha of Egypt is said to be raising cotton in great quantities: his next crop is expected to produce 400,000.

Return of Major Denham.—We feel great pleasure in announcing the safe arrival in Tripoli of this gallant and enterprising officer and his companions, from Boronou, in central Africa, after a residence of 18 months with the Shiek of that powerful and extensive kingdom. A letter which we have seen says, "We shall leave this place in a few days for England, and are happy in stating, that we have been successful beyond our hopes."—Sun.

From late London papers. At a magnificent public dinner given to Bolivar at Bogota, one of the company being called upon for a toast, gave—"Should at any time a monarchical government be established in Columbia, may the liberator, Simon Bolivar, be the Emperor."—A high spirited public character, Senor Pepe Paris, then requested permission to give a toast, which being acceded to, he filled his glass, and exclaimed—"Should Bolivar, at any future period allow himself to be declared Emperor, may his blood flow from his heart in the same manner as the wine does from my glass."—he poured the wine out of his glass upon the floor. Bolivar immediately sprang from his chair, ran to Senor Paris, and most warmly embraced him, exclaiming, "If such feelings as those declared by this honorable man shall always animate the breasts of the sons of Colombia, her liberty and independence can never be in danger."

The Dog.—An affecting anecdote was a short time since related in the French papers: A young man took a dog into a boat, rowed to the centre of the Seine, and threw the animal over with intent to drown him. The poor dog often tried to climb up the side of the boat, but his master as often pushed him back, till over-balancing himself, he fell overboard. As soon as the faithful dog saw his master in the stream, he left the boat and held him above the water till help arrived from the shore and his life was saved.

JAMAICA AND PERU.

From a gentleman who came passenger in the brig Rolls, arrived below last evening from Jamaica, we have intelligence from Kingston to the 29th March. Advices from Liverpool to the 24th February, of the great rise in colonial produce had been brought to Jamaica by an English brig in the very short passage of 26 days—which caused an immediate advance in the prices of the produce of the Island—Coffee, which had been selling at 10 cents previous to the receipt of the intelligence, went up to 14.

Peru.—Another gentleman who came passenger in the Rolla, left Guayaquil as late as the 12th of February last—and had communication with a vessel which had left Lima on the 1st February, up to which time the castle of Callao had not surrendered.—The frigate United States was about to sail north from Lima on the 15th January, for one of the smaller ports on the coast. The crops in Peru were very abundant, and there was a probability of a considerable surplus for export. At all the ports on the Pacific, American flour was a mere drug, and could not be disposed of except at immense loss to the shippers.

In addition to the above intelligence, we find the following in the Gazette of last evening.

We have received some few items of information from South America, by a gentleman who arrived this morning from the Pacific, via Kingston. It appears that the Patriot squadron had completed its repairs at Guayaquil, and was on the eve of sailing for the close blockade of Callao, and to assist at the storming of the Castle, for which purpose a quantity of heavy ordnance had been taken on board for the use of the army.—The reinforcements from Colombia consisting of two thousand men, had been put in transports at Guayaquil, and had gone up to Lima to take part in the reduction of the Castle of Callao. In a conversation which our informant had had with General Bolivar, it was understood that a determination existed to force the surrender of the Castle at all hazards. We regret to learn that a most distressing mortality had prevailed among the Colombian troops on their passage across the isthmus, and the loss estimated to have taken place by those destructive fevers incident to the climate in that quarter, was estimated at nearly two thousand men. Every part of Peru except Callao was in a state of tranquility, the inhabitants generally resuming their former occupation and preparing for the enjoyment of the peace and liberty won by patriotic courage. Baltimore Patriot.

From the National Gazette.

The following information has been communicated to us by a gentleman, who has just arrived from Lima, Guayaquil, via Panama and Jamaica:

The Castle of Callao remained in possession of the Spaniards on the 1st Feb. but was closely blockaded by the troops of General Bolivar by land, and the Chili squadron of four sail, and two Colombian vessels of war; and every preparation was making to reduce them by storm when the expected reinforcement of troops and ordnance should arrive from Guayaquil; which the general had resolved on doing, even should he make it a great sacrifice of lives.

Transports with 2200 Colombian troops sailed from Guayaquil for Chorrillos about the 20th January; those were all that were left of 4000 men transported from Colombia to Guayaquil via Panama, more than 1800 having died at the island of Puna, at the entrance of Guayaquil river.

The Congress and Limanian, Peruvian Corvettes, sailed from Guayaquil on the 8th Feb. to join the squadron off Callao, and the frigate Protector, mounting sixty guns and well manned, was ready for sea.—Those, together with the Macedonian schooner of 18 guns, had on board the ordnance and ammunition for the reduction of Callao. Some dissatisfaction had prevailed among this squadron in consequence of the arrest of their Admiral, Guise, who, from some misunderstanding with the Intendant of Guayaquil, had been sent under an escort to Lima for trial.

The new Congress was to convene at Lima on the 10th Feb. but it was supposed some change would be made in the members before they become a regular body, four-fifths of them being Padres, and not generally popular with the Liberator.

DOMESTIC.

From the Baltimore Patriot.

A gentleman last evening handed us the "Free Press—extra," dated at Harper's Ferry, April 28, from which we make the following extract.

LOOK OUT FOR THE MURDERER!

A man of a suspicious appearance and character has been in Loudon county, near Harper's Ferry, for a week past, and a strong belief has been excited, from a variety of circumstances, that he is the murderer of Miss Cunningham, near Baltimore. He answers the description of the monster, given in the newspapers, except as to dress, which he says he lost with his knapsack in Newmarket, Md. He afterwards, however, engaged a washerwoman, stating that he intended in a few days to go for his clothes. He returned to the Loudon settlement on Tuesday, the 19th instant, having been absent since the first of March.—He informed Mr. Shriver, a respectable citizen of Loudon, that he passed by the place about two hours after the murder; he was the first who gave Mr. S. information of it, and conversed about it in a manner which betrayed some anxiety or uneasiness. He was much disturbed in his sleep, frequently exclaiming "There they are! there! there! don't you see them? look at her! she's a beautiful girl! Poor thing, she's dead! Where's the child?" When awakened, and questioned, on the subject, he said that whether awake or asleep he continually saw a young woman, that he felt much disturbed, and did not know the cause of it, &c.

As soon as he heard that a suspicion was excited, he disappeared. Several persons were in pursuit of him yesterday, and he was last heard of within a mile of Harper's Ferry, on the Maryland side. His name is Markle; he has worked at this place, was convicted of theft in this county about 18 months since, and served 12 months in the penitentiary.

Our informant states, that after the extra was issued, the person was brought into Harper's Ferry, and after an examination was committed to the jail at Charlestown, Va.—He has some doubts of his being the murderer of Miss Cunningham, but is quite certain he is the one who recently committed a robbery at the foot of the White Mountain, as advertised in the Hagerstown and other papers.

Singular Accident.—This morning a young lady, (Miss Sarah Ferris, of Stamford, Ct.) was shot in Chatham-street, by the accidental discharge of a pistol. The particulars, as far as we have been able to ascertain, are these:—a gentleman was engaged in the third story of No. 25 Chatham-street, shewing a pistol to a friend, who not knowing it was loaded, pulled the trigger, and two balls were discharged, which entered the window of the second story of the opposite building, No. 48, occupied by Mr. Mills; several ladies were in the room, and one of the balls entered the leg of Miss Ferris, a little below the knee, and lodged, it is believed, some inches below. We called at Mr. Mills' about noon, and were informed that although the ball had not been extracted, strong hopes are entertained that amputation will not be necessary. Miss F. is about 18 years of age. N. Y. Com. Adv.

The Biter Bit.—A cunning thief secreted himself in a store on Peabody's wharf on Wednesday, and was locked in when the store was closed. Having succeeded thus far so happily, he had only to wait till the stillness of the night should afford him an opportunity to accomplish his design. It appears that he broke open the desk of the counting room, and finding 30 or 40 round dollars, was probably satisfied with committing no further depredations; then he had only to unhasp a door and walk off at his leisure, which he did, without disturbing even the watchmen. He has probably discovered before this that the dollars are all counterfeit! Salem Gaz.

Speculation.—Shortly after the arrival of the Crisis in New-York, which appears to have formed the crisis in the speculating fever, a trig little Frenchman arrived at our landing in the Fulton, having been despatched from the knowing ones in New-York to take in the flats at Providence and Boston. The little Frenchman had almost rapped his knuckles off upon the top of his snuff box in his eagerness to reach Providence before the despatch, Linnaeus, and as soon as the boat touched the wharf, he sprang on shore and hastened into the first store he arrived at on Water-street. "Monsieur, Sair!" says the little Frenchman, with all the eager gesticulations of his country, and trembling in the anticipation of the immense profits he was about to realize—"Sair! huf you anee cottang and Kaf-faa?" "Yes?" "Vel! den I tak him all! vat you ax?" Proc. Journal.

The Presbytery of Orange convened at Washington, Beaufort county, on the 6th ultimo, when fourteen Ministers of the Gospel and several ruling Elders attended. On the following day, the new Presbytery Church in that town was dedicated to the worship of God.

EXECUTION OF PIRATES.

Translated for the New-York Evening Post, from a Porto Rico paper of the 30th March.

Between the hours of eight and nine in the morning of yesterday, as had been announced, the eleven pirates were executed, and expiated by their deaths the dreadful and inhuman crimes they had committed, in depriving of their lives and property the unhappy persons who had the misfortune to fall into their hands.

An immense concourse of spectators witnessed this dreadful but necessary scene. A strong detachment of the Infantry regiment of Grenada, formed a square to assist at the execution and maintain good order. Every thing that humanity could suggest to mitigate the sufferings of those unhappy men, was lavished upon them with care and generosity; from the moment of reading to them the terrible sentence that condemned them to cease to exist, they were looked upon only as objects of compassion, and every one while detesting the crime, pitied the criminals. The most profound silence prevailed among the numerous assemblage; each person feared to disturb in their last moments, the religious exercises in which they were engaged, and the fruits of the pious solicitude with which the respectable ministers of the holy religion were endeavouring to take, as it were by the hand, those unhappy souls to the mansion of the Creator, imploring with them the divine mercy by the means of edifying exhortations and prayers. With the utmost care and precaution, the most effectual measures had been taken to prevent them from suffering, and that their death should be instantaneous, as was the case; upon a silent signal previously agreed upon, and while they were repeating the prayers that the priests dictated to them, raising their voices as they receded, that their distance might not be perceived, a discharge from the file of soldiers appointed for the purpose, drove the whole eleven at one time into eternity; a single instant, and without their observing the precise moment, transferred them from the house of the living to the darkness of nonexistence.

In this manner were terminated the lives of a set of criminals, who have so long been the terror of these coasts. Their bloody corpses now notify him, who may have the misfortune to suffer himself to be carried away by ungovernable passions to violate the laws of society, what destiny awaits him in the faithful island of Porto Rico. All nations will allow that there is not a government more zealous, active and energetic, in performing its duty, than that of this island; nor a people who more esteem virtue and detest crime, and co-operate with their magistrates to punish it, than the people of Porto Rico. And if any one has doubted this, because of the artfulness and precaution by which the guilty, during some time, escaped detection, he will doubtless acknowledge his mistake, and be obliged to confess that the government of this island, assisted by the fidelity of its natives, can, and does effect more than the great number of vessels that were employed for the purpose have hitherto been able to perform. The pirates taken in the Mona Passage, those captured on the coast of Cabo-rojo with a boat, various others apprehended in the island, and the execution that has just taken place, will convince them that it is only by co-operating with the government of the island, that they can contribute to the extermination of piracy in its vicinity, which is the ardent wish of all feeling men, lovers of good order and humanity.

A Naval Court of Enquiry, to consist of Captain Isaac Chauncey, as President, Captains William M. Crane and George C. Read, as members, and Richard S. Cox, Esq. as Judge Advocate, has been ordered to assemble at the Navy Yard in the City of Washington, on the 2d day of May next, for the purpose of investigating the causes and motives of the landing of Captain David Porter with a military force at the town of Foxardo in the Island of Porto Rico, on the 15th of November last, and of reporting thereon. The same Court, at the request of Captain Porter, has been also ordered to inquire into the allegations which have been made against him, in relation to the employment of the force under his command in other objects than those for which it was destined, and particularly in the transportation of specie. Nat. Journal.

Conjugal Affection.—A gentleman lately died in one of our adjacent villages, who several years since, was sorely afflicted with a boil, so much so as to be compelled for several days to preserve the same position of his body. One day he made an effort to go into his cellar and took with him an old blue and white mug, which for many years had been an ornament in the family, and having hobbled to his cellar stairs, he unfortunately trod upon a potato, which precipitated him to the bottom of the cellar, breaking his boil, and putting him in the most excruciating pain.—His tender spouse hearing the noise, ran to the top of the stairs and called out—My dear, have you broken the mug? Smarting with pain, he exclaimed—No, but I've killed, and immediately dashed it against the wall.