

BIBLE SOCIETY.

Established at Philadelphia, in the Police, in which is embodied the Constitution of said Society, and the names of the Managers.

The Bible Society, established at Philadelphia, solicits the serious attention of the christian public, to a short statement of the origin and design of their institution, and of the considerations on which they hope for the patronage of the pious and the liberal.

It has been remarked, that every good action or effort is valuable, not only from its inherent excellence and immediate effects, but because it may draw after it a train of beneficial consequences of endless extent. We hope that this remark will receive some confirmation from the existence of this Society. Its origin is unquestionably to be attributed, to the example offered, and the efforts made by "The British and Foreign Bible Society," instituted in London about five years since. The plan of that society, now that it is delineated and carried into effect, is seen to be so important, so practicable, and productive of so much good, that we hardly know how to account for the fact, that it was not sooner devised and executed. Centuries have elapsed since the revival of letters and the art of printing have rendered it an enterprise less difficult than many which have been achieved, to furnish Bibles in all the languages, and to distribute them into all the parts of protestant christendom. Yet, during that period, millions of those who have borne the christian name, have lived and died without a Bible, for the want of some such association as has lately been formed in Britain.* The example there set has already been followed in several countries of Europe, and we trust will soon be imitated in various parts of these United States. From the time that it was known in this city, it attracted the marked attention of several persons, accustomed to take an interest in whatever is calculated to extend the influence of revealed truth. It was immediately seen that the necessity for such an institution was the same here as in Europe, and that there was every reason to believe, that if suitable exertions were made, it could not fail of encouragement. The principal difficulty was to concert the most promising plan for rendering the contemplated charity extensively useful. Two systems were deliberately considered. One was to endeavour to form a large association, consisting of members selected from all the states in the American Union, to raise a common fund, and to distribute Bibles in every part of our country. The other was to establish a society on a smaller scale in Philadelphia, the attention of which should be principally directed to the state to which the city belongs, and to those portions of the states of Jersey and Delaware which are contiguous to Pennsylvania. The latter system, on mature consideration, appeared, in every view, to claim the preference; and it has accordingly been adopted. A Society for the whole of the United States seemed liable to almost insuperable objections. It was thought to be scarcely possible to form it in such a manner as not to occasion some dissatisfaction even at the outset. It would be difficult and expensive for the members to attend the meetings. It would not be easy to agree on a place at which they should stately convene, nor to distribute Bibles, with sufficient care, through so wide a region as the plan would require. It was believed, in a word, that such an institution would never be conducted with vigour, nor be likely to continue for a length of time. An institution with more confined views would be easy to manage, and within its proposed sphere, more efficient in its operations. It could more exactly ascertain where the supplies of the Word of Life were needed, and could furnish them with greater speed and certainty. But the most powerful inducement of all to the preference given, was the confident hope that similar institutions would be established in a number of other places in the United States, which, by acting with spirit and unanimity, each in a narrower compass, would ultimately produce a much greater amount of benefit, than if a general society should be organized for the country at large. If as many Bible Societies should be instituted as there are States in the Union, the number probably would not be too large; and we cannot but think that they would contribute essentially,

* This association consists of distinguished characters, both clergymen and laymen, nobility and gentry, in the established church, and among the dissenters. They have expended during the last year, above twelve thousand dollars. They have been at the expense of various editions of the Bible and of the New Testament, in the English, the French, the Spanish, the Welsh, and the Gaelic languages. They have encouraged an edition to be printed at Berlin, in the Bohemian language, and an edition of the New Testament in the language of Iceland. They are preparing to print in the Calmuc dialect, and in the language of the Mohawks, which latter nation has been already supplied with the Gospel of St. John. They have encouraged, by liberal donations, the exertions making in India for translating the Scriptures into the various languages of that country. And they have now in contemplation impressions in the Arabic and in the modern Greek.

With such zeal for the printing of the Bible, there have been proportionate endeavours for distributing copies of it, not only to all descriptions of the poor in England, Scotland and Ireland, to their army and navy, to French, Spanish and German prisoners, but to all the nations in whose languages they have caused it to be printed, and to the British dependencies in different parts of the world. How immense may we reasonably suppose is the good which has been produced.

The Society mention difficulties to have arisen from the want of the Continent; yet they pursue their object with an unrelenting ardour. The example has given birth to similar Societies in the United Kingdom, and to other co-operating endeavours in Germany, Denmark, Prussia and Switzerland.

both to the glory and the safety of the American confederacy. It is our opinion, however, that the boundaries of states ought not to be scrupulously regarded in the formation of these establishments.—There are many and obvious advantages resulting from their existing in large towns or cities from which, as from centres, the circumjacent regions, intimately known, because constantly traversed on errands of business and commerce, can be easily and effectually furnished with the requisite supply of the Sacred Volume. We shall venture then to say, (considering that the suggestion will be received with the fraternal spirit with which we are conscious it is offered) that we hope the time is not distant when we shall see institutions similar to our own in the town of Boston, and in the cities of New-Haven, New-York, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston and Savannah, and in the town of Lexington in the state of Kentucky.

To these places it is our intention that this address shall be immediately forwarded; and let it be distinctly understood, that it is with the most earnest desire that our christian brethren there may be sharers with us in the good work in which we have engaged; that we cordially invite them to co-operate in it; and that we will esteem it a favour to maintain a friendly correspondence with them, and to unite our counsels and our endeavours with theirs. Nor let it be supposed that in specifying the cities and towns which have been named, we have any intention to intimate that there may not be other places equally suitable for the establishments in question. Of this their own citizens will judge, and we will at all times be ready cordially to greet as a sister institution every Bible Society, in whatever place, or part of our country, it shall appear.*

The design of our Society has been partially explained in stating its origin. We further remark more particularly, that it is a fundamental article of our constitution, that all the copies of the Bible which we distribute shall be separated from all notes and commentaries whatsoever, and, except the contents of the chapters, shall contain nothing but the sacred text. It is therefore manifestly a design in which all denominations of christians, without exception, may unite. They all profess to derive their creeds and sentiments from the sacred writings. They all profess to believe that those writings contain the fountain of life, which, of course, they are equally bound to open to those who may be perishing, under maladies which nothing else can relieve.

It is the design of the Society, moreover, to endeavour, within its prescribed bounds, to distribute the Bible, in the native speech of all who shall be disposed to read it; so that, if possible, it may not remain a sealed book to any who desire to understand its contents. The English and German languages are the most generally used in Pennsylvania and its neighbouring states, and arrangements have already been made to obtain a large number of Bibles in each of these tongues. It is known likewise, that Bibles in Welsh and in French, will be in demand, and it will be our endeavour that they shall not long be demanded in vain.

It is also the intention of the Society to offer the Bibles which they disperse, as the sacred treasure which they contain is offered, 'without money & without price.' No worldly gain, either direct or consequential, is to accrue to the individuals of the Society from any of its transactions. Every member at present, not only pays his contribution, but renders every service he performs without prospect or expectation of pecuniary emolument; and whenever it shall become necessary to indemnify any individual for the time and labour he may devote to the service of the institution, or to take any measures calculated ultimately to benefit the funds, the managers pledge themselves that the most rigid principles of economy shall direct their proceedings.

It was the discriminating character of the gospel at its first publication, that it was preached to the poor; and it is to the poor chiefly that we have it in expectation to send the inspired and authentic records of that gospel. To present to them in the sacred pages, the offer of "the pearl of great price," of which however, they may have alightly heard, many of them will never be able to read, if a Bible be not given them.—To enable them to see for themselves, the provision made by the Father of mercies, to sustain them under the privations and suffering of time, by the hope of happiness in eternity.

While the poor generally, will thus claim the peculiar notice of the Society, a still more special regard may be shown to those who suffer from confinement or from crime, as well as from poverty. We cannot express it without emotion, that we hope the time is at hand when the beams of the sun of righteousness reflected from the Holy Scripture, will penetrate and cheer the gloom of every prison in the state of Pennsylvania. The system of penal law, at present existing in this state, contemplates the reformation of criminals, as a part of the design of their punishment. And how is reformation to be produced or expected, without the influence of inspired truth! But beside criminals there are in places of

* Perhaps it will be found expedient in some cases, that a number of branch societies, in several parts of a state or region of country, should be formed and connected with a principal one, where the funds may be deposited and the Bibles purchased.

confinement, in poor houses and in hospitals, a large number by whom the gift of a Bible will be estimated highly.—not a few we trust, contemplated in the memorable and affecting declaration of our country's Lord: "I was sick and in prison and ye came unto me." To accommodate the aged and infirm of this description, Bibles printed with a large type and on good paper will be procured for their special use.

The Society do not propose, however, to restrict themselves so rigorously in the gift of the Holy Scriptures, as never to offer them to an individual able to purchase for himself.—There are many families in which a Bible is not to be found, the heads of which might, probably, without any great inconvenience, give for the book the price at which it is sold; and yet, partly through poverty, and principally through indifference, this possession, so necessary to every family, and so inexpressibly important to youth, never makes a part of their property. Families thus circumstanced, the Society will consider and relieve. They will even inquire after them, in hope that they may not only supply the wants that shall appear, but may also remind the careless of neglected duty, and thus prompt them to reformation.

The soldiers and sailors of our country would, we are persuaded, often prize the gift of a Bible, and find in it the best support and solace of their hazardous and laborious occupations. To them, therefore, we propose, so far as our means may permit, to present this invaluable article of equipment.

On the frontier of our country, where books of every kind are scarce, and where religious knowledge and instruction, in any form of communication, are scarcely imparted, there will be a wide field, in which to scatter this precious seed of eternal truth and life.—Under the auspices of several religious denominations, the civilizing and christianizing of the Indians is at present going forward, with the fairest prospect of success. It will be with us a favourite object to furnish, to the extent of our ability, those copies of the Sacred Scriptures, which will doubtless be in demand in the progress of this interesting work. Nor will the poor Africans, not only of Pennsylvania, but of some other states, fail to share in our special regard.

It is, indeed, not easy to foresee all the cases which may occur to demand the attention of the Society. As they arise, they will be distinctly considered, and the general rule of proceeding will be that wherever the Bible ought to be possessed, and cannot, or will not otherwise be obtained, there to bestow it freely. (Concluded in our next.)

MISCELLANY.

On the phenomenon of *looming*, in the neighbourhood of New-York: written August, 1808, by the Hon. S. L. Mitchell, L. L. D.

THAT modification of the law of refraction, by which visible objects on some occasions loom to the sight, is not, as yet, fully explained. At least, no satisfactory explanation has come to my knowledge. Having lately witnessed some of these optical appearances, it may be worth the while to make a written description of them.

I crossed the Hudson, in company with two of my friends, from the city of New-York to Hoboken. Our intention was to proceed thence on foot, over the rough and picturesque region that lies between that place and Wiehock, to visit the spot where two gentlemen, who a few years ago were highly distinguished among their fellow-citizens, decided their last affair of honour. The acquaintance I had both with Burr and Hamilton, and a knowledge of many of the political occurrences about which they differed, induced me to survey the ground they had chosen for their final contest. I had a desire also to examine the monument erected in commemoration of the latter, and of the event which deprived him of his life. We reached the bank where the lists had been marked out; and Capt. Day, the proprietor of the farm, very politely showed us the positions of the boats that brought the combatants: their respective situations when they fired; and the spot where the survivor left his antagonist senseless from the wounds he had inflicted.

This field of blood is a narrow strip covered with trees and stones, and lying between the jutting border of the river on one side, and the lofty and impending precipice on the other.

From the bow of this superb eminence of basaltic rock, there is a grand prospect of the river, the bay and their shores. The promontory of Hoboken and the penitentiary house at Greenwich are plain in view. The shores of New-York and Jersey are directly before you. Fort Columbus, the best constructed and most formidable military work in the nation, presents a noble spectacle. The other islands with their rising fortresses and batteries conduct the eye forward to the narrows, between Long and Staten Islands, where the joint currents of the North and East Rivers communicate with the ocean; and the constant appearance of ships and vessels as they pass this great thoroughfare, affords unceasing amusement to the beholder.

It was in this strait that our prospect that day was enlivened and diversified with *looming*. For as we looked from the rocks of Wiehock toward the Narrows, visible objects underwent several fantastic changes, and seemed to be oddly distorted. The atmosphere was clear and calm. A square rigged vessel would sometimes exhibit nothing but her upper sails and rigging, while her hull was invisible. A perago would look as if suspended in the air, and a misty body interposed between her bottom and the surface of the water. Then again sails would heave in sight as if from the clouds, and no vessel be discernible to which they belonged. The trees on the opposite shores seemed to project far over the river, and labour, as it were, to form a connection by a verdant arch. The alterations from these to other forms were frequent, and few of the appearances remained many minutes the same. Objects generally appeared higher and larger. The perversions of figure were however not universal, but took place

most particularly in vessels under sail. Also some low lands commenced, visible objects remained in their proper shapes and proportions, and no *looming* seemed, long before sunset.

(Hoboken, N. J.)

THE BACHELOR.

A Bachelor is a sort of whimsical being which nature never intended to create. It was formed out of the odds, and odd materials were left after the great work was over. Unluckily for him, the finer passions are all mixed up in the composition of these structures intended for social enjoyment. What remains for the Bachelor, is hardly enough to rub round the crusty mould into which he is thrown. To avoid waste, some sensation, he may not be quite insipid, must be substituted in a heap of more valuable ingredients. In dame Nature tosses *self-love*, without water or measure—a kind of understanding distils for no other use, a sprinkling of wisdom, which turns to acid, from the sour disposition of the vessel in which it is contained; & the whole composition is concluded with an immoderate portion of oddities. Thus formed and finished a Bachelor is popped into the world, mere limbs, without a possibility of being happy himself, or essentially contributing to the happiness of others.

His only business is to keep himself quiet. He gets up to lie down—and lies down to get up. No tender passions enliven his waking hours. No agreeable reveries diversify his drowsy slumbers. If he ever speaks the language of sensibility, he speaks it on the excellence of some favourite dish or on the choice liquors with which his cellars abound. On no subjects, he feels the raptures of a lover.

The pace of the Bachelor is sober—he would hardly mend it to get out of a storm, though threatened a deluge. But shew him a woman entitled to the compliment of his hat, and he will shuffle on, as if he was walking for a wage. His house-keeper, or his landlady, he can speak to without reserve; but any other of the sex, whose condition is above a useful dependent, is his terror.

A coffee house is his *sacrum sanctorum*—against bright eyes and dazzling complexions. Here he lounges out half his days. At home, he solitarily sits down to his unsocial meal, and when his palate is pleased, he has no other passion to gratify.—Such is a Bachelor—such the life of a Bachelor—what becomes of him after death, I will leave the reader to determine.

THEODORE—A FRAGMENT.

The eve was damp and chill. Darkness veiled the face of the sky. The deep roared, & the mad billows lashed the rugged beach. Theodore was seated on a cliff overlooking the sea shore. His face was pale and emaciated; his hair hung in wild disorder, and he was beating his breast in despair. The remains of his departed Margery had just been committed to the dust. Distractedly he had followed the hearse; and after the sad ceremony of interment, had sat bathing the end of his consort with many a tear. Desperation had driven him hither. In melancholy transport he exclaimed, "My fair one, my beloved, the idol of my soul, the pride of nature, is gone—is ravished from me!—Roar louder, ye sea! ye winds, howl!—pour down ye rains, a deluge! groan, ye elements, in concert with my woe!" He paused with unutterable anguish. Spent with complaint, he reclined his head on a rock, and fell asleep. The gale strengthened; the rains descended in torrents; the seas boiled with fury; hoarse thunder rumbled and keen lightning darted from the heavens! Theodore, once more awoke and upwards cast his eyes. At that instant a bolt from the impending cloud, commissioned by indulgent fate, closed them forever.

Anecdote of General Junot.

Junot is a native of Orleans. His origin is too obscure to be traced; and, before the revolution, he was a private soldier in the French guards. At the siege of Toulon, early in 1794, he became first personally known to Bonaparte, who there commanded a detachment of the artillery. His aid-de-camp being killed close to his side, while employed in taking down a process verbal, or notes of the passing transactions, Bonaparte called out to send him instantly a person who could read and write. Junot, then in the ranks, possessing these qualifications, was selected to fill the place of the aid-de-camp who had fallen. But scarcely had he written a few lines, which Bonaparte dictated, when a cannon ball tore up the ground before them, filled their eyes with dust. "How fortunate!" observed Junot with perfect composure, "I wanted some sand for my paper and it comes!" The *sans froid* with which this remark was made attracted Bonaparte's attention. He detatched of Junot his name, and from that day retained him near his own person. He has risen under his master to the summit of revolutionary honours, dignities and emoluments. At this time he is Governor-General of Portugal, Colonel-General of the Hussars, a General of the Staff, Governor of Paris, and Duke of Abrantes, one of the most ancient extinct Portuguese titles. His income, including the lands assigned him in Poland, does not fall short of 17,000*l.* sterling a year. Junot is in the vigour of his age, of a figure uncouth and vulgar; his face seamed with scars, and his manners corresponding with his external appearance. He married, nevertheless, a few years ago, an Albanian Princess.