

From the Port Folio.

VENTRILQUIZM OF THE CELEBRATED MR. FITZ JAMES.

The busy indolence of London has often of late, been much engaged by the marvellous feats of Mr. Fitz James, one of the most astonishing performers that has ever confounded the ignorant, or edified the philosopher. For the following account of his wonderful talents we are indebted to Mr. W. Nicholson, the scientific editor of the Journal of Natural Philosophy, Chymistry, and the Arts. What gives to this article the greatest weight and interest is, that Mr. Nicholson, a philosophical remarker, was an eye witness of the prodigies, which he describes.

I have now the satisfaction to give some account of the performance of Mr. Fitz James, one of the first masters of the art of ventriloquism; who in addition to his very striking powers as a speaker and an actor, has the candor and liberality to explain the nature of the performance to his auditors. I was present a few evenings ago at a public exhibition, which continues to be repeated at Dilow's, in Soho square; and though my account of what I saw and heard cannot but be very imperfect, and far from exciting the surprise which the actual performance produces, it may, nevertheless, be of utility to establish a few principles, and remove some errors respecting his art.

After a comic piece had been read by Mons. Volange, Mr. Fitz James, who was sitting among the audience, went forward, and expressed his suspicion that the ventriloquism was to be performed by the voices of persons concealed under a platform, which was covered with green cloth. Replies were given to his observations, apparently from beneath that stage; and he followed the voices with the action and manner of a person, whose curiosity was much excited, making remarks in his own voice, and answering rapidly and immediately, in a voice which no one would have ascribed to him. He then addressed a bust, which appeared to answer his questions in character, and after conversing with another bust, in the same manner he turned round, and in a neat and perspicuous speech, explained the nature of the subject of our attention; and from what he stated and exhibited before us, it appeared that by long practice he had acquired the faculty of speaking during the inspiration of the breath, with nearly the same articulation, though not so loud, nor so variously modulated, as the ordinary voice formed by expiration of the air. The unusual voice being formed in the cavity of the lungs, is very different in effect from the other. Perhaps it may issue in a great measure through the trunk of the individual. We should scarcely be disposed to ascribe any definite direction to it; and consequently are ready to suppose it to come from the place best adapted to what was said. So that when he went to the door, and asked, "Are you there?" to a person, supposed to be in the passage, the answer in the unusual voice was immediately ascribed by the audience to a person actually in the passage; and upon shutting the door, and withdrawing from it, when he turned round, directing his voice to the door, and said, "Stay there till I call you." The answer, which was lower, and well adapted to the supposed distance and obstacle imposed, appeared still more strikingly to be out of the room. He then looked up to the ceiling, and called out in his own voice, "What are you doing above?" to which an immediate answer was given, which seemed to be in the room above, "I am coming down directly." The same deception was practised on the supposition of a person being under the floor, who answered in the unusual, but very different voice from the other, that he was down in the cellar putting away some wine. An excellent deception of the watchman trying the hour in the street and approaching nearer the house, till he came opposite the window was practised. Our attention was directed to the street, by the marked attention which Fitz James himself appeared to pay to the sound. He threw up the sash and asked the hour, which was immediately answered in the same tone, but clearer and louder, but upon his shutting the window down again, the watchman proceeded less audibly, and all at once the voice became very faint, and Fitz James in his natural voice said, "He has turned the corner."

In all these instances, as well as others which were exhibited to the very great entertainment and surprise of the spectators, the acute observer will perceive that the direction of the sound was imaginary, and arose entirely from the well studied and skilful combinations of the performer. Other scenes, which were to follow, required the imagination to be too completely misled to admit of the actor being seen. He went behind a folding screen in one corner of the room, when he counterfeited the knocking at a door. One person called from within, and was answered by a person from without, who was admitted, and we found from the conversation of the parties, that the latter was in pain and desirous of having a tooth extracted. The dialogue, and all the particulars of the operation that followed, would require a long discourse if I were to attempt to describe them to the reader. The imitations of the natural and modulated voice of the operator encouraging soothing and talking with his patient; the confusion, terror, and apprehension of the sufferer; the inarticulate noises produced by the chairs and apparatus, upon the whole, constituted a mass of sound, which produced a stranger, but comic effect. Loose observers would not have hesitated to assert that they heard more than one voice at the time: and though this certainly could not be the case, and it did appear so to me, yet the transitions were so instantaneous, without the least pause between them, that the notion might very easily be generated. The removal of the screen satisfied the spectators that one performer had effected the whole.

The actor then proceeded to show us specimens of his art as a mimic, and here the power he had acquired over the muscles of his face was full as strange as the modulations of his voice. In several instances, he caused the opposite muscles to act differently from each other: so that while one side of his face expressed mirth and laughter, the other side appeared to be weeping. About eight or ten faces were shown to us in succession as he came from behind the screen, which together with

the general habits and gait of the individual totally altered him. In one instance he was tall, thin and melancholy; and the instant afterwards with no greater interval of time than to pass round behind the screen, he appeared bloated with obesity and staggering with fulness. The same man another time exhibited his face simple, unaffected and void of character, and the next moment it was covered with wrinkles expressing slyness, and whim of different descriptions. How far this discipline may be easy or difficult, I know not, but he certainly appeared to me to be far superior to the most practised masters of the countenance I have ever seen.

During this exhibition, he imitated the sound of an organ, the ringing of a bell, the noises produced by the great hydraulic machine, and the opening and shutting of a snuff box.

His principal performance, however, consisted in the debates at Nauterre, in which there were 20 different speakers, as is asserted in his advertisement, and certainly the number of different voices was very great. Much entertainment was afforded by the subject, which was taken from the late times of anarchy and convulsion in France; when the lowest, the most ignorant part of society was called upon to decide the fate of a whole people, by the energies of folly and brutal violence. The same remark may be applied to this debate, as to other scenes, respecting tooth-drawing; namely that the quick and sudden transitions and the great differences in the voices gave the audience various notions, as well with regard to the number of speakers, as their positions and the directions of their voices.

LONDON, Sept. 3.

The French commandant before Cadiz, until lately, allowed water to be drawn from Port St. Mary, for the use of the French prisoners on board the Spanish prison ships; but with a view to distress the city, by increasing its consumption of that necessary article, he has peremptorily forbidden the supply; and the prisoners, who are still numerous, are in consequence much inconvenienced.

The American traders to the Baltic have, on several recent occasions, given such information to the French consuls at the Russian, Prussian, and other ports in that sea, as has tended to the seizure, and confiscation of numerous vessels supposed to be British, navigating under foreign colours—One of the New York papers (the Gazette of the 23d July,) after mentioning the state of the Swedish markets, adds, "about 20 sail of British vessels, under American colours, laden with colonial produce, &c. are at Gottenburg with forged papers." The Americans, seem not aware, that in raising doubts as to the legality of ship papers, they furnish Bonaparte with a most plausible pretext for their own destruction.

A decree of Joseph Bonaparte was published at Madrid on the 14th of July, in which he requires all the municipalities of the kingdom to subscribe to the Madrid Gazette. This is going a step beyond his brother, who only prescribes what newspapers are to be sold, not what are to be bought and read.

Yesterday's Gazette contains a letter from capt. Willoughby, of his majesty's ship Nereide, giving an account of one of the most splendid exploits ever performed by human beings. It is like reading a romance to read that letter. Yet, the style is not arrogant or boasting. The letter is modestly written, as this fine passage shews—"Nor do I think an officer or man of the party, except myself, had an anxious thought for the result of this unequal affair." It is the *chivalry of the deed* that throws an air of extravagance, and almost of fiction, over the scene.

FROM THE LONDON GLOBE OF SEPT. 5.

Admiralty Office, Sept. 4, 1810.

Copy of a letter from vice admiral Bertie, commander in chief of his majesty's ships and vessels at the Cape of Good Hope, to John Wilson Croket, Esq. dated on board the Ranger transport, Table Bay, 30th June, 1810.

SIR—I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the information of their lordships, a copy of a letter addressed to me by capt. Lambert, of his majesty's ship Nereide, containing an account of an enterprize successfully performed by him at Port Jacotel. I have the honor to be, &c.

A. BERTIE.

His majesty's ship Iphigenia, off the Mauritius, May 5, 1810.

SIR—I have the honor to transmit you a letter that I this day received, bearing date the 1st inst. from capt. Willoughby, of his majesty's ship Nereide, detailing an account of the most gallant enterprize performed by him at Jacotel, the south east coast of this island: his success I am happy to add, was crowned with inconsiderable loss, considering the force he had to contend with. I have the honor to be, &c.

H. LAMBERT.

Vice-Admiral Bertie, &c. &c.

His majesty's ship Nereide, May 1, 1810.

SIR—On reconnoitering the south east coast upon this date, I perceived at the anchorage of Jacotel a ship of about four hundred tons; as she lay within pistol shot of the two batteries which commanded the entrance of the harbour. I did not leave the Nereide until twelve o'clock A. M. and after much difficulty, found and entered (at 5) the narrow intricate passage; and owing to the low water, the surf half filling the boats. I was in hopes of landing and falling upon their left battery without being discovered, but the imperial sch'r L'Estafette, of four brass guns and thirteen men, commanded by Ensign De Vaisseau Henry Charwin, unfortunately laying at anchor, so completely gave the alarm, that by the time the boats grounded, both batteries and two field pieces were playing upon the only spot we could land; and our men no sooner formed on the beach than they were received by a heavy fire of musquetry. As every officer knew before we landed what was to be done afterwards, the whole party was instantly upon the run, and in ten minutes in possession of the above battery: having spiked their guns, we moved towards the guard house, protected by two field pieces, forty troops of the 18th regiment of the line, forty six artillery and a strong

party of militia, the whole commanded by lieutenant Rackman, of the 18th regiment. This party, while we were taking the battery, had attacked and driven our boats, with the division left to protect them, into the centre of the harbour. Their open fire upon us was the signal for charging, and to my amusement, they instantly gave way with a speed we could not equal; their officer, who deserved to command better soldiers, was taken prisoner with his two field pieces.

Hitherto twilight had hid our force, full day shewed to the enemy the Nereide's small band of volunteers, consisting of 50 seamen, and the same number of marines; the strongest battery in their possession, and to gain which it was necessary to pass the river Jacotel, at the foot of a hill covered with wood, and defended by the commandant of the Savannah district, col. Etienus Colgard, two cannon, and a strong body of militia. Owing to the late heavy rains we found the river swelled, and the current so strong, that the tallest men could scarcely wade, the short helped over, and more than half the party upon the swim, and in the thick of fire from the enemy; but this difficulty no sooner surmounted (though not without the loss of the greatest part of our ammunition) than three cheers warned the enemy to prepare for the bayonet. The Junglehill, two guns battery, and colours, were carried in style, and the commandant, col. Colgard, taken prisoner: nor do I think an officer or man of the party except myself, had any anxious thought for the result of this unequal affair.

Having spiked the guns and one mortar, burnt and destroyed their carriages, the works, magazines, &c. and embarked the field pieces, some naval and military stores, I was upon the point of returning to the ship, when the strong party I had driven from the first battery and field pieces, appeared to have recovered from their panic, re-assembled (strongly reinforced by the militia and bourgeois inhabitants of the Island) upon our left; and as the Nereide's attack of Jacotel was the first ever made upon any point of the Isle of France, and knowing its principal defence consists in its militia, I determined upon running some risk to let them know what they had to expect if their Island was ever attacked by a regular British force. Moving towards them, they at the same time advancing within musquet shot, they opened their fire, and I instantly turned direct into the country, in an oblique line to them, to get into their rear, and if so, not to leave to the defeated party the resource of a retreat: at first they halted and remained upon their ground; but the moment we began to move in quick time, and they understood my intention, then they again beat us in fair running, for more than a mile in the country. On returning to our boats, we burnt the signal house, flag staff, &c. a mile from the beach; and having sounded well the harbour, and done all I wished, I again embarked and returned to the Nereide.

I now beg you will allow me to express how highly I approve of the gallant and regular conduct of every officer and man who landed; indeed, I feel myself under the greatest obligation to the senior lieutenants, Burn, Langham, and Deacon, and lieutenant Cox, commanding the marines, with lieutenant Desbrisay, under him. I have to regret my return of killed and wounded.

The loss of the enemy could not be ascertained, nor do I know the force opposed to us; but from every information gained, and from the French officers themselves, they declare that 600 men can reinforce the batteries by signal in an hour. I remained on shore four hours in a clear morning, and the signal was flying the whole of the time.

I have, &c.

[Signed]

N. J. WILLOUGHBY.

CURIOS WILL.

Thursday week the remains of Mr. TURE were interred at Wath, near Rotherham. The deceased had bequeathed in his will—

To every child that attended his funeral one penny each. (From five to seven hundred attended.)

To every poor woman in Wath 1s. each. To the ringers 10s. 6d. to ring one peal of grand bells, to strike off while putting him in his grave—(which was done.)

To seven of the oldest navigators, one guinea, for putting him up in the grave.

To his natural daughter 4l. 4s. per annum. To his old and faithful servant, Joseph Pitt, 21l. pouds per annum.

To an old woman, who has for eleven years tucked him up in bed, only 1l. 1s.

Forty dozen of penny loaves to be thrown from the church leads at twelve o'clock on Christmas Day, for ever.

Two elegant brass chandeliers for the church. And twenty pounds towards a set of new chime.

PARIS, August 23.

Her royal highness, Madame, the emperor's mother, has returned to Paris from Aix la Chapelle.

We hear from Germany that the journey of count Gottorp (the late and lawful king of Sweden) related entirely to family affairs; and as their decision must come from Stockholm, he has gone to Wirtemberg in Saxony, where he will wait its arrival.

On Tuesday the emperor held a council of commerce at St. Cloud.

LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

On the 3d inst. his majesty issued the following decree from the palace of Trianon:

"1. There shall be one journal in each of the departments, with the exception of that of the Seine.

"2. This journal shall be under the authority of the Prefect, and cannot be published but with his approbation.

"3. Nevertheless, the Prefects may provisionally authorise in our great cities, the publication of papers containing advertisements in the nature of posting-bills, or hand bills, relative to sales of articles of merchandize and immoveable property; and journals, treating exclusively of literature, the sciences, arts and agriculture. The said publica-

tions must contain no articles foreign to their object.

"4. Our minister of the Interior shall, on the 1st of September next, make a report to us upon the said advertising journals; the publication of which may be definitively determined."

Gen. Wouillemont, commander of the department of the Upper Pyrenees, has addressed a letter to the Prefect of the valley of Aran, which is as follows:—"My position in the valley of Aran having been threatened by some troops who had collected in the neighboring valley of Esterry, I determined to attack them on the night of the 31st ult. I began the march. Nearly the whole of the advanced guard of the enemy was put to the sword: the rest, after sustaining considerable loss, was driven back more than three leagues in the valley of Esterry. The Dutch guards are expected on the 29th of Versailles.

KILKENNY, (Ireland) Aug. 16.

We are becoming as much disturbed in the county of Tipperary. The Earl of Besborough's extensive estates being chiefly out of lease, have been advertised to be reset, with an annexed declaration that none need apply in the first instance, but the old tenants, to whom a decided preference would be given. Mr. Walsh his Lordship's Agent, attended at the time fixed for setting the lands, and proposed the moderate advance of 20s. which his lordship expected, but which was refused by them all with great insolence; and their return, placards were distributed throughout all the Barony, denouncing all those who should be punished of death who would dare to take a single farm of his lordship over their heads. Lord Besborough's agent has spiritedly published the offer of a reward of 500 guineas to any informer, on whose evidence any person shall be convicted of writing or publishing one or more of these sanguinary placards.

NEW YORK, October 27.

At twelve o'clock on Saturday night, the Powder Manufactory belonging to Messrs. Tilton, Averd and Patterson of New Lebanon, in this State, was blown up. Two of the buildings, the drying and glazing houses, containing about a ton and a half of powder, most of which was uninjured, were totally destroyed, and the other buildings materially injured. The loss of the proprietors is a severe one. No pains or expense had been spared to render the works complete, and by their exertions and industry they had acquired the knowledge of manufacturing powder far superior to most of that in the United States, and very little inferior to any imported.

Whether the fire was communicated by the hand of a foreign or domestic incendiary, or otherwise, is impossible to state with certainty. The proprietors had taken every precaution in the construction of their works to guard against fire, and at the time of the explosion they can conceive of no possible way in which the fire could have originated within the buildings. Be that as it may, the loss is much to be regretted. The manufactory bid fair to be of great national utility; it was the only establishment of the kind in this State, and as such a peculiar interest was felt for its prosperity. The ardor of the enterprising owners is somewhat damped by the misfortune. They, however, have determined to rebuild immediately, and it is hoped that every facility will be rendered to aid them in their laudable exertions.

FIRE.—Yesterday morning, about 9 o'clock a fire broke out in the shop of Mr. Woodruff, cabinet maker, in Fair street. The shop, together with about five or six hundred dollars worth of tools and lumber were consumed; and the houses on each side slightly injured.

LAND.

I WISH to sell a valuable Tract of LAND of 500 acres, on a credit of one, two or three years, on which is a new and excellent *Grass Mill*, with open ground sufficient to work six or eight hands to advantage and equal in fertility to any in the up country.

D. W. DAVIS.

Franklin county, Oct. 29, 1810.

Raleigh Academy.

THE semi-annual Examination of the Students of the Raleigh Academy will commence on Tuesday the 13th of November, in the Commons' Hall of the State House, and continue for three days.

On Tuesday evening, which will be the second day of the Federal Court, the City Theatre Corps will perform, for the benefit of the Academy, a Comedy called

"A CURE FOR THE HEART-ACHE."

With the Musical Entertainment of

"ROSINA."

On Wednesday and Thursday evenings there will be public speaking by the students. On Friday morning Mrs. Sambourne's students in Music will be examined.—On Friday evening the Polemic Society will perform, for the benefit of their Library, the Comedy of

"LOVERS' VOWS,"

And the much admired Farce, called

"THE PRISONER AT LARGE."

The Parents, Guardians, and Friends of the Students it is hoped will attend.

N. JONES, President.

October 30.

As many of the Trustees of the Academy as can make it convenient are requested to attend the Examination.

John C. Russel.

AT THE SIGN OF THE EAGLE TAVERN,

Louisburg, Franklin County.

RESPECTFULLY gives notice that he keeps a private house, exclusively for the accommodation of genteel travellers. His house is well provided with liquors, and his stables abundantly supplied with forage. He has erected a carriage-house for the reception of carriages, &c. and pleads for himself to spare nothing to ensure satisfaction. Louisburg, October 23.