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PHILOSOPHICAL.

FOR THE RALEIGH MINERVA.

Do you think the following atheistic communication would afford either amusement or information to any part of your readers, if it is respectfully submitted for publication, by your most obedient,

S. R. G.

ORANGE COUNTY, OCT. 14TH, 1817.

Ignis Fatuus.

On Thursday, the 2d inst. about 7 o'clock in the evening, whilst I was usually passing by one of my plantations, (which borders on a considerable marsh,) I discovered a light at some distance in the field apparently about the size of an ordinary faggot, and near the height they are usually carried. As there is a footpath which passes near this place I was for the moment impressed with the belief that it was some person passing with a torch, as the night was unusually dark:—But before I had gone many steps farther, it instantly arrested my attention by suddenly elevating itself near a hundred feet. Sometimes it would rise, and then sink, thus continuing alternately to elevate and depress itself for about two minutes, when it became almost stationary. I was fully persuaded that it was an ignis fatuus, and resolved on examining it as minutely as possible. It continued stationary but for a moment; when it again began to elevate itself, at the same time making small depressions until it rose (as well as I could judge) full two hundred feet above the surface.—For a few moments it again became stationary, except a small vibration which it seemed to perform.

After sporting for some time in this manner, repeatedly spreading and contracting itself, as if emulous to exhibit its greatest and least magnitudes, being anxious to learn every minutia of this phenomenon of nature, I was resolved to approach it as near as possible, but instantaneously (when most brilliant) it darted off for some hundred yards with the rapidity of a meteor, in a right line, some what approaching the earth. This was indeed a scene truly sublime, and surpassed by few that I have ever witnessed either of nature or art. Whilst it was in this rapid motion, I could plainly discern it emitting small, glowing particles, resembling sparks of fire, which fell but a little distance before they became extinguished.—After relieving this last scene of grandeur, which brought it near that side of the field upon which I was standing, for a moment it totally disappeared, but soon again presented itself in a place different from that in which it vanished, and not more than fifty yards distant from me, appearing more brilliant than at any former stage of action, and affording more light than the largest faggot, throwing so considerable an illumination around it as to render the neighboring objects visible. Its height, which was now about 15 or 20 feet above the ground, and its motion, which was both rapid and undulating, seemed directly towards me. Altho' I had no reason to dread any annoyance from an object which (I think) owes its origin merely to a decomposition of animal or vegetable substances, yet I must own, whilst it was thus so arrogantly approaching me, I was not altogether void of those fearful sensations with which the parents of Julius were impressed, whilst a lambent flame played around the head of their son.—However after approaching within about ten steps of me, and being not more than six feet above the surface, (more fortunate than I could have expected,) it again became stationary. Here I had the satisfaction to view it at the greatest advantage, as there was no intervening object between us.—It appeared to be one uniform body of light. At first it seemed of a globular form, but kept no certain shape, sometimes expanding and sometimes contracting itself, having a tremulous motion, not unlike that exhibited by swarming bees, or a collection of sporting insects. It must be of a light composition, for I here discerned it make a little movement which was I think occasioned by a slight motion of the air. After viewing it here as minutely as I could, I attempted to approach by degrees some what nearer, but it, either seeing or hearing me, (if I may use the expression,) kept continually receding before me, being yet as luminous as ever. Presently elevating itself a little, it directed its way towards the marshy ground and soon disappeared. Whether this object owes its origin to a decomposition of animal matter or whether it is a collection of luminous particles or what? I shall wave conjecturing. I am unskilled in science and my name is unconnected with academic honors. It must therefore be left to the philosopher to determine. The Ignis fatuus, however, has long been ranked among the most mysterious appearances of nature. I must again add that there are but few scenes which can afford more interest to the spectator than those presented by this strange ethereal light, which, like a consummate comedian, presents us a full display of all the

feats of his art, immediately steps behind the curtain and disappears.

S. R. G.

RURAL ECONOMY.

CULTURE OF THE COMMON HOP.

By John H. Nicholas, Esq.—“The intrinsic value and extensive use of the *humulus lupulus*, or hop, is so universally known, and all its excellent qualities converted to their full account with so much simplicity and ease, that it excites our surprise to see the cultivation of this inestimable vine, so little understood, or so much neglected, especially in those sections of the country where it is most used, commanding the highest price, and in a soil where it would flourish to the highest degree of productiveness. In N. England, particularly in the state of Massachusetts, where the hop is cultivated with great success, on an extensive scale, the soil is far inferior to those of the western or middle states; yet in one county (Middlesex) and a few towns of another (Essex) there are undoubtedly more hops raised than in any other five states, or even perhaps the whole Union. The vine is cultivated with much more labor and expense, and yet the produce sells at a price less than in those states where it is most used and might be cultivated on the most advantageous scale; not only as an article of domestic utility, but a staple commodity for exportation.

The hop is of the reptile species, and is sexified; the female flower being far superior to the male, both in size, weight and equality. Its culture is simple and easy when well understood and will render a profit, even in Massachusetts, at 12 1/2 cents per pound.

The ground selected for a hop field should be a dry, rich meadow or river flat, as far from the stream as may be, but never ascending a steep. If the field has been under a growth or crop, it should be well ploughed in the month of October, and the roots placed at the distance of four feet apart; four roots in pairs containing one or more joints placed in each hill at a convenient distance from each other and the whole covered with earth or manure:—in April or as soon as the frosts have subsided, the mounds are to be carefully opened, as the young shoot is very tender. The vine will then be suffered to grow, the plough having passed at right angles across the field, until the vine shall have acquired a sufficient length and strength to ascend the poles. Poles must then be set, two or three in a hill, according to the appearance of the vine. The best vines are then very carefully wound spirally up the poles, with the course of the sun; no more than three healthy vines to a pole; the residue are suffered to languish; those which ascend being secured by a thread, generally in two or more places, as the poles are of length, say from 12 to 20 feet.

The hop field is generally ploughed and hoed from three to four times, first at the time of poleing and last when the flower bells, which will be in August, either earlier or later according to the season and climate. It ripens in all September, and which is known by the seed, which changes its green color to a brown smoke; it is then gathered with the utmost expedition, as the equinoctial storms destroy the flower when they occur at this state of the ripened hop.”

DOMESTIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN STAR.

Sir—I send you some few remarks, which, on perusing, if you think not objectionable, you can insert in your next number. As your paper has considerable circulation in North Carolina, the piece I suppose cannot be too local for your purposes.

NORTH CAROLINA.

Among the states of the Southern section of the Union, which by population, wealth and progressive advancement in civilization and science, deserve respectable rank, North Carolina assuredly must be numbered. Until late, it is known, she has not assumed that attitude, nor urged her pretensions to that character, to which her resources justly entitle her. This tardy development of strength must be sought for partly in the narrow minded policy of those selected to legislate on her affairs, and partly in the obstacles and apparently insuperable difficulties which are liable to meet every important essay towards “internal improvement.”—But it is a glorious effect of the spread of literature, that the means of man become more extended in proportion to the enlargement of his desires and the development of his wants. A respectable & well regulated University, in co-operation with a number of excellent Schools, have within a few years, so diffused the light of science throughout the State, that it may be said with truth, her rise and progress has been rapid and surprising—her zenith promises to be the lasting and brilliant.

Happily for the interest as well as honor of North Carolina, her sons seem to be aroused to a sense of her many natural advantages—advantages which a moderate portion of time and due energy alone are requisite to display. True, it may be properly said, where so much is yet to be effected, nothing has been done; But let it be considered that a zeal in the cause of internal improvement has been excited, and a spirit shed abroad, not possibly to be suppressed. I understand that a certain Archibald D. Murphy, a member of the Legislature, has been the Prospero of this tempest of popular feelings, patriotic exertion and laudable effort for State aggrandizement. Indeed, from the animated manner in which his fellow citizens

speak of him, in connection with this subject, it may be supposed, in the impressive language of the poet, that he “labors without rest, and operates unspent.”

Success, commensurate with his meritorious efforts, attend him. Should the attempt for improving the navigation of the rivers and clearing out obstructions to commerce, as regards the inlet to the ocean, prove successful, what a town might and must North Carolina, in a few years, boast on her Atlantic border. At present she has no town of either commercial or inland importance. Wilmington is, perhaps, the only one that enjoys any commerce, in the usual acceptance of the term; and her pretensions, I apprehend, are moderate.

Raleigh (the seat of government) is a delightfully situated and flourishing inland town—its importance however, is entirely derived from its being the capital of the state, and the various public offices established there. The growth of this infant city, has heretofore been kindly aided by the Legislature of the state. How long this patronage, so justly due, may be continued, is I suspect, a doubtful point. She appears lately to have a formidable opponent to her progress, in the town of Fayetteville, on Cape Fear river. The Penitentiary Bill, introduced the last session, would, I am told, in all probability, have passed into a law, but for a division of sentiment on the part of the Legislature, in regard to its location—some, operated upon by prejudice or interest, striving to fix it at Fayetteville. It is supposed, that had this design succeeded, the gigantic grasp would ere long have been made, and the seat of government, with the appertaining public offices, soon followed. This is the place at which the Directors of the United States Bank have determined to locate a Branch. This was an error.—The city of Raleigh ought to have been selected. Her claims, as I understand them, were not only feasible, but, comparatively speaking, unanswerable. 1st, As the seat of the state government, at which both propriety and custom have sanctioned the practice of placing all public offices, *ceteris paribus*. 2dly, In compliance with the wishes, and for the better accommodation of the general government. 3dly, Because the holders of the greater part of the stock were in favor of locating at Raleigh. 4thly, As being understood that the dividend on stock of the state bank was greater there than elsewhere in the state. 5thly, In addition to the place selected (Payette) that there was not an original stockholder in the town. These claims, however, when preferred by the Directors of the Bank, appear to have had no weight in comparison with that of Fayetteville derived from her commercial character. For, agreeably to the information of a gentleman (a large stockholder, then at Philadelphia) it was made evident by the statement accompanying the memorial, that the trade of Fayetteville was worth considerably more than that of the rest of the towns of the state, collectively.—Thus fell to the ground the pretensions of the seat of government. How the Legislature of the state, at their next session, will feel affected on the subject, time must shew. Arguing *a priori*, it may be inferred that the decision will give some offence to that respectable body.

AN OBSERVER.

PEACE SOCIETY.

Correspondence between the Massachusetts' Peace Society and the Emperor of Russia and Prince Gallitzin.

From the Corresponding Secretary to the Emperor.

Brighton, (near Boston,) April 9, 1817.

Sir—The friendly disposition which you have manifested in favor of the Christian religion and the peace of the world, has encouraged this address. The very week in which the Holy League of the three Sovereigns was announced in Russia, a society was formed in Boston, by the name of the Massachusetts Peace Society, the object of which is to disseminate the very principles avowed in the wonderful alliance, and to do whatever may lawfully be done to prevent the recurrence of war, and to promote peace on earth and good will among men.

I take the liberty to present a copy of all the publications which have been circulated by the society. From these you may obtain information of the state of the society, the number of its members at the close of the first year, and its prospects. The first Annual Report, and the list of officers and members, are contained in the seventh number of the Friend of Peace. Many members have since been added; a new society has since been formed in the State of New-York. At least four Peace Societies have been organized in the United States—others are about forming. Besides these, we have in our country nearly one thousand congregations of Friends or Quakers, which we regard as so many Peace Societies by profession and practice.

The pamphlets your Majesty will be pleased to accept, as a token of the veneration and esteem in which your character is held by the Friends of Peace in this country.

In behalf of the Massachusetts' Peace Society,
NOAH WORCESTER, Cor. Sec.
His Majesty, Alexander, Emperor of all the Russias.

THE EMPEROR'S ANSWER.

Sir—Your letter in behalf of the Massachusetts' Peace Society, with the Books accompanying it were received. The object which this Philanthropic institution has in view, the dissemination of the principles of peace and amity, among men, meets with my cordial approbation. My endeavors to promote peace and good will among the nations are already

known; and the power and influence which Almighty God has committed to me, shall ever be employed, I trust, in striving to secure to the nations the blessings of that peace which they now enjoy.

Considering the object of your society, the promotion of peace among mankind, as one so eminently congenial to the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I have judged it proper to express these sentiments respecting your labors, in answer to your communication to me on this subject.

ALEXANDER.

To Rev. Noah Worcester, Secretary of the Mass. Peace Society
St. Peterburgh, July 4, 1817.

LETTER TO PRINCE GALLITZIN.

Brighton, (near Boston,) April 9, 1817.

Sir—Your name is known and revered in America as the President of the Russian Bible Society. The confidence which your excellent official letters have inspired, induces me to send for your perusal all the publications which have been circulated by the Massachusetts Peace Society. Similar copies will accompany these for your worthy Emperor. The noble ground which he has taken in the Holy League, has greatly encouraged the hearts of the friends of peace in this country. As the pamphlets will give you information of the prospects of the Peace Society, I shall only express the hope which is entertained, that your name will be enrolled among the avowed friends of peace, and there shine with as great lustre as it has done among the Presidents of National Bible Societies.

NOAH WORCESTER, Cor. Sec. M. P. S.
His Excel. Prince Alexander Gallitzin.

ANSWER OF PRINCE GALLITZIN.

Sir—I received your letter of the 9th April with the Numbers of the Friends of Peace accompanying it, by the hands of Mr. Parsons; for which I return you my hearty thanks. The object which your Society has in view is of great importance to the well being of the human race. Indeed it seems to me to be almost the same as the Bible Societies; for it is only in proportion as the Divine and peaceable principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ prevail in the hearts of men, that lasting and universal peace can be expected.

A blessed period is promised in the word of God, when man shall learn the art of war no more. This period I understand to be the same as that in which it is prophesied that all men shall know the Lord, even from the least unto the greatest, and that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.

These latter promises seem to be daily fulfilling in every quarter of the world, by the exertion of Bible and other Christian Societies, to disseminate among men the saving and pacific principles of Jesus Christ. They are preparing the way for your Society's gaining its object—peace—universal peace—when men shall learn the art of war no more. Most earnestly praying for every blessing to accompany your labor, in promoting peace on earth and good will among men, I shall reckon it a peculiar honor to be among the members of such a humane Society. I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

PRINCE ALEX. GALLITZIN.

To the Rev. Noah Worcester, Secretary of the Mass. Peace Society.
St. Petersburg, July 4, 1817.

At a meeting of the Trustees of the Massachusetts Peace Society, Sept. 25, the foregoing correspondence was communicated, and by them ordered to be published. If the Editors of newspapers shall see fit to republish it, the officers of the Peace Society will be gratified, and, it is hoped, that the cause of peace will be promoted.

CONNECTICUT.

New-Haven, Oct. 9.

Governor's Speech.—We hasten to lay before the public, his excellency Gov. Wolcott's speech, delivered this day before both houses of the assembly, at about half past 11 o'clock.

The house of representatives have made choice of Wm. Bristol, Esq. republican, speaker, and Gideon Tomlinson and James Lunman, Esqs. both republicans, clerks. The votes for speaker were, Wm. Bristol, Esq. 126, Jonathan W. Edwards, Esq. federalist, 52. Majority for Bristol 74.

Gentlemen of the Council,

Mr. Speaker, and

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives—The circumstances under which we are now convened, to deliberate on the concerns of the state, are peculiarly auspicious. Peace and tranquility, general health; and a genial season, favoring the exertions of unusual industry, has been succeeded by ample rewards. While these blessings demand expressions of gratitude to the kind disposer of events, they encourage benevolent dispositions towards each other, and united exertions to advance the prosperity of our constituents.

Since the last meeting of the legislature, propositions have been received, from the states of New-Jersey and Kentucky, for amending the constitution of the United States, which will be submitted to your consideration.

Information has been received, that the ordinance department of the United States is prepared to deliver the proportion of arms and equipments to which this state is entitled, by an act of congress. I have, accordingly, directed the quarter-master general to adopt the requisite measures for effecting a settlement of our accounts to the close of the year 1816. An offer has been made to deliver, in artillery, a proportion of the value of what may be found due. There being no authority to assent to this pro-