

# The Raleigh Minerva.

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## TOPOGRAPHICAL.

The editor returns his sincere thanks to the gentlemen, through whose politeness he is enabled to place before his readers the following letter respecting the Red-River country.

Natchitoches, (Louisiana) May 21st, 1817.  
DEAR SIR,—

Under cover of a letter which I received two days since from my brother George, (who lives about 300 miles above St. Louis, on the Mississippi,) I received your letter of the 23d Sept. I assure you it gave me pleasure to hear from one from whom I once received many marks of friendship; and altho' many years have gone by since, the recollection is still fresh in my memory of numberless instances of kindness shown me by you.

Next December will close the sixth year since my removal to this country; my family at present consists of a wife and a pair of boys and girls, that is to say two boys and two girls.

The object of your letter being to request information of this part of the country; I will give you as far as my knowledge of it extends, every thing in my power, as well as my own opinion respecting it. The country on the Red River for about 600 miles from its mouth is all flat and very much cut up with lakes and lagoons. The cultivatable land is confined entirely to the banks of the river; not extending back more than from 15 to 25 acres, when it either overflows at every rise of the river, or is always a lake. The soil is perhaps not inferior to any, and some peculiarly adapted to the growth of cotton and tobacco; tho' the quantity of the former pick'd from an acre does not exceed what is produced in other states, it is the quality which gives it a decided preference in every market where it is known. The same may be said of tobacco; for segars it is considered by judges, to be very little inferior to Havana; and would, I am of opinion, be as profitable a crop as cotton, were the cultivation and management of it as well understood in this country. Nothing has been attempted here (except by way of experiment) in small grain. Wheat does pretty well, but is subject to the rust generally, I am told. Several planters have made small crops of the sugar cane for 2 and 3 years past: last year was made perhaps by all of them, 60 or 60 hhd's of sugar, of a quality such as you most commonly get at Fayetteville; but I think it doubtful whether it will not be found too precarious a crop to embark in extensively, owing to the uncertainty of the seasons about the time of the cane ripening; as a frost 8 or 10 days earlier than usual destroys it. Fruit, of every kind almost, succeeds well here, except apples and cherries. Peaches are very fine.—So much for the soil and productions.

The navigation of Red river is remarkable. There is perhaps no River in America or Europe of the same length which is navigable so long at a distance; say 1000 miles from its mouth. The principal trade of this place has been confined for the last two or three years to furs and peltries, which has been very profitable, and has enticed several merchants from New-York, with capitals amounting to 20 or 30 thousand dollars to settle themselves in this place. The Spanish trade from the adjoining provinces will probably revive again in the event of our government coming to the determination to take possession of the country at present occupied by the Spaniards; and from present appearances we think that will be done, unless the Spanish government change their sentiments very much from what they were a few months ago, as communicated to Mr. Monroe by their Minister Don D'Onis. We are here certain this is the intention of our government from the circumstances of 2 companies of Riflemen arriving here a few weeks ago with every thing prepared for a campaign, and from expressions which have dropt from the commanding officer. Should this be the case, it will open a new world to emigrants, abounding from report with every thing that is desirable. As to the healthiness of this country, I believe it to be about as healthy as Fayetteville, except in some situations near a lake. There is very little winter, not more than 2 1-2 or 3 months—December, January and part of February. Cattle and hogs live in the woods very well generally the year round. My having lived in Wilmington, (N. C.) for 8 or 9 years before coming here, a climate more unhealthy than this, is the cause I presume of my having enjoyed my health extremely well. With respect to the society here, I wish I could say as much in its favor as might be said of any thing else. The American society is as yet very small, not exceeding 7 or 8 families; and some of those being part French and influenced by them, reduces the real American society to very few. From this cause we have not been able to establish any schools, or any thing like a church,

nor in fact do one half of the small number of Americans here seem to care a straw about any such things; and those that do are so few in number, that the expense would be entirely too heavy for them. The distance from this place to New-Orleans by water is called 300 or 500 miles. Boats carrying from 2 to 3 hundred barrels, go down generally in 10 days, but take 25 to come up; freight is very high, 4 1-2 to 5 dollars per barrel up, and 1 dollar down.

The Indians in this quarter are, and have been, ever since the cession of Louisiana, very peaceable and friendly. There have been white men murdered by them in the Indian country, but they have been men who escaped from the gallows in their own country and were killed in attempting to steal Indian horses or some of their property. There are very considerable settlements, making on this river 3 or 4 hundred miles above this place; I am informed a great number of families from Tennessee, Georgia and South Carolina have removed there during the last winter. The country is represented to be in many respects preferable to this part of Louisiana. It is said to be better in point of soil, health, water and for stock. The want of good springs in this quarter of the state is a very great objection to emigrants from those states where they have been accustomed to fine cool spring water. The planters on the river who are not at the trouble to catch rain water, drink from the river, which at high water contains about 1-8th of an inch of red mud in a pint, and, in low water, as much salt and alum.

Having, I believe, gone thro' and replied to the different queries in your letter, I will for your further satisfaction give you my opinion generally of this country, supposing you were inclined to remove to it. To me it would be rather a delicate and irksome task to describe this country to one who I tho't would, upon the strength of my information, remove to it; because it rarely happens that two men think alike as to the beauties, &c. of any country; and it would give me much cause of regret, were you to take my word or my opinion, and should afterwards view every thing in quite a different light from my representation. This country (or the part of it however, with which I am acquainted) is well suited to a man whose principal object as a farmer, is to make a fortune by cultivating cotton; and who is willing for this to forego almost every enjoyment (health excepted) other countries afford. A man who can purchase 2 or 3 hundred acres of land, put on it a gang of slaves, sit down with them himself, and care not whether he sees any person who can speak English year in and year out; and cultivate cotton, may, at the present price of cotton, make money very rapidly. Five and a half years I have been in this country I consider as so much time lost nearly. The country in short wants every thing to one but a fine climate to make a residence in it barely tolerable. You will naturally ask why I have remained in it so long? and dislike it so much? It is because I have been in hopes of a change for the better particularly in the society; but I have now come to the determination to remove to the Missouri territory as soon as possible. I can wait no longer, altho' I still think there will be, in 8 or 10 years, a great change for the better. I should be happy to hear from you at any time when you may find it convenient to write. My brother George has, he tells me, written you. From his description of the Missouri country; I am more pleased with it than any I have heard of or seen.

The situation of this country is at present the same as respects provisions with yours. The crops failed last year. Corn is now \$2 per bushel, and scarcely any to be bought. Flour \$18 a 20 per barrel; Bacon 18 a 20 cts. per lb. In ordinary times corn is about 45 a 50 cents per bush. Pork 5 a 6 cents and Flour, \$10 a 12. For the latter article you will not consider it high, when you are informed that every barrel that is consumed here is bro't from Kentucky or Tennessee; there being no mills in this country and very few situations for building them; tho' this state of things would be very much changed—was there a change of population, say Americans in place of the French; which I think will be the case before a great many years.

You may perhaps think I have drawn too gloomy a picture of the Red River country; and ascribe its dark coloring to prejudice; but I have been as much as possible on my guard to prevent any prejudices getting the better of me.—I discover I have scribbled over two sheets, which will I think suffice and more than suffice for once, and will bid you adieu.

Your friend, &c.  
SAMUEL H. SIBLEY.  
Mr. James G. Mask.

## Latest Foreign Intelligence.

### AFRICA.

St. Helena.—The ship Palladium, which arrived at Salem on Friday, from Calcutta, 124 days, touched at the Island of Ascension on the 14th of October, and visited the English garrison stationed there. The East-India Register gives an account, the substance of which is as follows: The settlement consists of five or six buildings, in an area of about 300 yards square, which has been cleared of cinders by the soldiers. This consists of the Governor, Lt. Governor, and 40 seamen, boys and marines. They have one fort of 10 and another of 5 or 6 guns. Apprehensions were entertained by the officers that Bonaparte and the Island of St. Helena, were swallowed up by an Earthquake. It seems that three transports, the Ocean, London and Alexander, from the

Isle of France for England, with part of the 12th regiment touched at Ascension on the 27th September, having on the 19th sailed from St. Helena. But on the 20th, 70 miles N. W. of the Island, they were alarmed by several violent shocks of an earthquake, repeated at short intervals, which threw several persons out of their bed. Four days afterwards the ship General Graham, endeavored to make the Island but could not find it. They had it was taken several sets of lunar observations.

The master of the Palladium was in a similar situation with the General Graham, which the narration of these suspicions had reminded him of. On the 5th of October they had a solar observation in the paretell of the south part of St. Helena, and by recent lunar calculations of their run from the Cape of Good Hope with a fair wind, and their chronometers, they were 15 leagues eastward of the Island. They sailed W. northerly 15 leagues from this point until 6 o'clock.—and were then in the latitude of Jamestown, (the port) but not seeing St. Helena they bore up for the Island of Ascension which they made exactly as they should have done by their computation. It is said to be common between the tropics to have a thick haze so that land cannot be discovered until it is very nearly approached.

### Intelligence.

[The above marvellous account so far as it respects the swallowing up of St. Helena by an earthquake, on or previous to the 20th September, is certainly incorrect. Mr. Newby, the supercargo of the ship Trident, Captain Rea, which arrived at this port on Saturday morning in 102 days from Calcutta, informs the editor of the New York Mercantile Advertiser, that at 10 o'clock at night, on Sunday the 12th of October, they passed the Island of St. Helena on the south side, distant, about 3 leagues; and that, at 8 o'clock on the following morning, the Island was visible from the ship's deck.

The morning was clear; but, having a fine breeze, they lost sight of it in about half an hour. Mr. Newby also informs us that they did not experience on the passage any thing like the shock of an earthquake.]

The ship Minerva, Capt. Allen, which arrived at the port of New York a few days since in a short passage from the Isle of France, affords a distinct view of its rugged cliffs, and at a later period than the Palladium above accounts.

### EAST INDIES.—Bombay, July, 18—

We learn by letters from the Gulf of Persia, that a severe action had taken place between the Wahabee troops, commanded in person by Abdolaben Soed, and the Turkish troops under command of Abraham Pacha, the son of Ali Pacha, the Viceroy of Egypt, in which the former met with a severe defeat. The action took place at Matwasia, seven stages from his capital, Deriah. Abdolaben has since fallen back to the fortress of Budan, in the district of Kassim, four stages from Deriah, where he was again assembling his troops, in the hopes of recovering the credit he had lost by the defeat, which was complete, that it is stated, if Abdolaben could only follow up his success, the Wahabee power will be entirely annihilated.

On the evening of the 13th of June, M. Anderson the 4th officer of the frigate Charles Grant, was swimming a short distance from the ship, accompanied by a quarter master and freecorps man. M. Anderson struck out and swam towards a Portuguese frigate, lying about half a cable length from him, and he was followed by the two men. As they approached the frigate, Mr. Anderson was heard to say "dout drown me," on this exclamation, the quarter master turned round, and to his inexpressible horror and alarm, saw an immense shark darting at Mr. Anderson.—immediately exerted his whole strength for his town safety, and fortunately succeeded in getting on board the Portuguese frigate. The alarm was given and the boats of the frigate and Charles Grant were instantly lowered down into the water, but unfortunately without preventing the fatal catastrophe. The shark passed Mr. Anderson, then turned round and took him under the water, which was instantly discolored, with his blood, he rose again; but was then attacked by five or six more of these voracious animals and he was gone in an instant. One shark was observed to be making after the fore-castleman, on which a sentry on board the frigate, with great presence of mind and coolness, levelled his musket and shot the fish, thereby preserving the life of the sailor. The next day a large shark was caught by the people on board the H. C. ship Vansittart, measuring up yards of 12 feet.

Calcutta, July 15.—EARTHQUAKE.—Forty distinct shocks of Earthquakes which are stated to have been felt at Herwal-Bagh between the 26th May, and the 12th ultimo, have caused great alarm at that station.—The first of these shocks occurred at about eleven o'clock at night, and is said to have lasted several minutes. It made every one jump out of bed and leave the hungalows from fear. Several buildings were thrown down in the province and also in Gurwal. This visitation had not subsided at the latter date above mentioned.

INDIGO.—We observe that the unfavorable accounts concerning Indigo, sent us by a Correspondent from Jeffere, under date of the 3d inst, and inserted in our last, are now confirmed by a letter of the 5th from the same place quoted in the Calcutta Gazette. It is a lamentable circumstance that this industrious and

enterprising class of men should be threatened with seeing their labors rendered unavailing by the untowardness of the weather, when the reviving trade, and advantageous market of Europe, seemed to promise so far a reward of their exertions.

Calcutta, July 10.—The marquis of Hastings, our most noble Governor, has proceeded to the Country, to arrange an attack to be made, when the Rains cease, on the Rajah of Buitpore, a place of uncommon strength, which resisted the efforts of the army some years ago by the Marquis Wellesley.—It is probable that they will carry it, for the means are adequate and will not be spared under any false notions of economy.

[With regard to the East Indies, it may be remarked, generally, that those portions of the country which are not at war with the European settlements, are constantly engaged in civil contests, in which the greatest excesses are committed. It would be impossible, at this distance, to give any thing like a connected detail of them.]

### RUSSIA.—ST. PETERSBURG, FEB. 11.—

Diplomatic Frivolities.—1. The members of the corps diplomatique, accredited to the imperial court, are permitted to import, without obstacle, for the space of ten months from the day of their arrival, every thing necessary to furnish their establishments there, as horses, carriages, furniture, tapestry, table services, gold, silver, bronzes, glass, china, liveries, linen, &c.; in a word every thing necessary for a great establishment. All these articles shall be admitted without obligation, and without examining whether they were permitted or not, upon the simple declaration of the members of the corps diplomatique, that they belong to them, and are destined for their use and that of their suite.

2. But if, after the expiration of ten months, they desire to have prohibited articles, they must make a special application for permission. Upon all the permitted articles above specified, there shall be made, once for all, counting from the day of their arrival, a remission of the import duties in the following proportions.—First. To an ambassador, legate, or nuncio, 3000 roubles in silver; second, to ministers, envoys, and others, accredited to his majesty, two thousand roubles.

3. The charge-d'affaires or residents accredited by the ministers for foreign affairs, 1000 roubles.

### SPAIN.—Sale of the Floridas.—

An official article in a late Madrid Gazette, estimates the probable product of this sale, as among the Ways and Means to discharge the four hundred millions of debt Spain is burthened with. In a few days, however, the mystery which envelops this subject will be dissolved.—Boston Centinel.

### FRANCE.—PARIS, OCT. 2.—

The two pretended Dauphins.—Mathurin Bruneau who calls himself Charles de Navarre, son of Louis 16, but whose father is really a poor man of Ve zins, near Chatelet (department of Maine and Loire) reminds us of the imposture of Jean Marie Hervaguat, who, in 1796, took the name of Louis Charles de Boushon, son of Louis 16. This Hervaguat, son of a tailor of Saint Lo, possessed of a wild and disordered imagination with an interesting appearance and a large share of penetration, had succeeded, in spite of his want of education in imposing upon a great number of persons, who, considering their birth and knowledge, ought to have been prepared to reject such an imposture. Thus he met with many adventures in Calvados, L Oras, and other neighboring departments. These were however followed by several penalties to which he was condemned. Finally, arrested the 3d of April 1803, he was condemned, in conformity to the penal laws, to four years imprisonment, for having by false names, &c. abused the credulity of divers persons. At the expiration of that time, Hervaguat was detained as a state-prisoner—he died at Bicetre, near Paris, in 1812.

M. Eckard, at the end of his Historical Memoirs of Louis 17: gives some curious details on the romantic adventures of this impostor, and of the proceedings of the tribunals which pronounced the sentence of death.

### SOUTH AMERICA.—Buenos Ayres.—

A letter from Buenos Ayres, dated the 10th of Aug. received by a gentleman in this city, says, that general Artigas has proclaimed Pueyrredon and three others, natives and merchants of that place, traitors, for sending ships loaded with provisions to the Portuguese at Monte Video, and thereby enabling them to make a stand against the patriots, at the time when the scarcity of bread at Buenos Ayres, and the sufferings of the people there, were extreme.—The character of a traitor has been applied to Pueyrredon from more than one quarter; he is formally designated as such by all the authorities which rule over the eastern shore of the river Plate, to wit: Entre-Rios, Santa Fe, Corrientes and Paraguay. Perhaps these public declarations may be explained by the ignominious author of the pamphlet lately published at Washington, entitled South America.

Pueyrredon has solicited the congress of Buenos Ayres to extend the term of his administration to three years more, "to deprive the citizens (which are his own words) of the inclination and propensities to change and revolutions." What an instance of delicacy in the first magistrate, to ask for himself a continua-