

A few years ago, a similar pestilence carried off the muscles inhabiting the sea coast of N. York. In one of my excursions among the sedge-lassocks and sand-islands, whose surrounding waters nourish these bivalve molluscas, I had a fair opportunity of knowing that the destruction was enormous.

You may yourself recollect the remarkable disorder, that more recently drove the Beluga whales ashore at Chaleur bay in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. As if possessed by some misguiding spirit, these inhabitants of the ocean rushed in shoals to the land, and offered their bodies as fair game to the men of the neighborhood.

It is an universal law of organic nature that life should be temporary. The individuals rise from their imperceptible beginnings, perform their round of living functions, and sink to be seen no more. Sometimes they disappear one by one, at such remoteness of time and place, that their departure is scarcely perceived, and excites neither a strong nor durable sensation. At other times, the terminations of life are more frequent, and villages and towns are alarmed by the visitations of death. And then again, when from a distemper of the elements or of the humors, human beings are swept away in multitudes by the besom of destruction, terror and consternation mark the progress of the epidemic. Philosophers and Physicians, with chemists to help them, have as yet no satisfactory theory of these sore and wide wasting distempers. Facts are wanting, in relation to the human race, as well as to other animals, and I will add, to vegetables. As an editor of one of the journals of the times, I have carefully registered a great proportion of those which have occurred within the last 20 years. The volumes of the Medical Repository contain the faithful history of our popular diseases.

More, however, is required. Longer observation is necessary. The materials must be collected. In due time some fortunate genius, some master builder will appear, and arrange them into a noble edifice. In the mean while, you and I and others, must labor, adopting for our maxim, never to be weary with well doing.

You have done well, sir, to collect the facts. I thank you for your goodness in sending them to me. There is great encouragement to labor where the harvest is abundant and a scarcity of hands.

SAM'L L. MITCHELL.

To J. Motte Alston, Esq. Georgetown, S. C.

Foreign.

NORFOLK, SEPT. 15.

Late and interesting Intelligence from the Spanish Main.

Captain Kerr, of the British schr. Seator, has politely favored us with a proof sheet slip from the office of the Trinidad Courant, dated the 26th August, which contains the following highly interesting extract.—Capt. K. has also handed us a file of the Courant to the 26th of August.

TRINIDAD, AUG. 29.

“On Friday, the 21st inst. anchored in this port, about ten miles to the Southward, Adm. Brion, from Guayana, with the following squadron under his command.

Victoria, Captain Cowie, flag ship.

Columbia, Captain Hill.

Spartana, Captain Bavelo.

Favorite, Captain Bernard.

And having had a sort of neutral communication with Adm. Harvey, proceeded early next morning for his destination.

A squadron of what they term their subtle force, composed of gun boats and fleechas, with 700 men of disembarkment on board, commanded by Com. Diaz, and Gen. Bermudez, which had descended the river with the Admiral, and debouched by the Cano de Macaroo, and rendezvoused at Point Deceas, were ordered to join to the Westward.

The result of this expedition was received here yesterday by a canoe, and has been, that Guira, was attacked at 10 o'clock on Monday night, the 24th inst. and carried by assault, with very little loss to the assailants, but a very considerable one to the Spaniards, who fought with bravery until the Favorite having got close in to the redoubt, and opened her fire from a 24 pounder on a pivot loaded with grape; they immediately fled into the interior with the greatest precipitation, leaving behind their arms, ammunition, and every thing, even to their segars. The force afloat has also been all taken; it consists of 9 gun boats, and some vessels with private property, chiefly cocoa, of which, it seems, there is a large quantity in the town, and on the coast. The blockade being now raised, we hope to see very soon the happy effects of a free navigation, by the arrival of lots of cattle and mules from Guayana and Guarapiche.

Of the casualties in this affair, we have not seen any detail; but the report states generally, that they were very trifling on the part of the assailants, but on that of the assailed enormous, which however, we may be permitted to doubt.

P. S. Since the foregoing was prepared for the press we have received a circumstantial account of the military and naval transactions which led to the surrender of Guira, by his majesty's ship Scamander, Capt. Elliott, who was sent there on professional duty by the Admiral, and had an opportunity of observing all that passed. We shall present our readers with the detail in our next: in the mean time, we embrace this moment to correct an error in our foregoing statement of the land forces under Gen. Bermudez, which amounted only to 70 boys, instead of 700 men; but these young Republican heroes proved themselves fully competent to perform the work.”

We learn verbally from Capt. Kerr, that the intelligence received by the Scamander, relative to the above affair, was in substance as follows.—That frigate had been dispatched by the British Adm. to demand from the Spanish Commandant at Guira, the release of two English vessels improperly detained by him. On her arrival in the Bay, Admiral Brion was making his disposition for attacking the place. The Spanish Commandant refused to give up the two English vessels, and the Scamander stood out and lay off the harbor to reconnoitre the engagement, which soon commenced. Previously, however, Adm. Brion sent word to the Capt. of the Scamander to give himself no concern about the vessels, as he would engage to deliver them to him in the course of the day, which he did. During the action, the Favorite (mentioned in the preceding account) got becalmed in a situation which left her at the complete disposal of the enemy, who boarded her and massacred every one of the crew. Soon after this horrid act of barbarity, a breeze spring up, and the Admiral in the Victoria (not the Favorite as stated above) was enabled to take a favorable position, when he opened a tremendous fire on the Spanish flotilla, and batteries. In a little time the fire of the Spaniards was completely silenced. Those at the batteries fled in all directions, while those in the gun boats were indiscriminately put to death by the avenging sword of the Patriots.

Capt. K states that the universal impression at Trinidad was, that the Patriots would very soon be in undisturbed possession of every inch of territory in Venezuela. He also mentions a fact, by no means unimportant, that in an exchange of communication between the British Admiral and Admiral Brion the former addressed the latter with his official title of “Admiral and commander in Chief, of the naval forces of the Independent Government of Venezuela,” thus recognizing the independence of the power under which he acted.

CALCUTTA, (INDIA) APRIL 29.

We take the following curious account from a Bombay paper.—“Captain Powell, of the Queen Charlotte, informs us of the interesting circumstance of his having recovered from a rock, 31 miles N. W. of Nooaheevah, (one of the Marquessas) a man that had been its solitary inhabitant for nearly three years. His account stated, that early in 1814, he proceeded thither from Nooaheevah, with four others all of whom had left an American ship there, for the purpose of procuring feathers, that were in high estimation among the natives of Nooaheevah; but losing their boat on the rock, three of his companions in a short time perished, through famine, and principally from thirst as there was no water but what was supplied by rains. His fourth companion continued with him but a few weeks, when he formed a resolution of attempting to swim, with the aid of a splintered fragment which remained of their boat to an Island, in which effort he must have inevitably perished. He had once, himself, attempted to quit his forlorn situation, by constructing a catamaran, but failed, and lost all means of any future attempts. They had originally taken fire with them from Nooaheevah, which he had taken care to continue, excepting on one occasion, when it became extinguished, and never could have been restored, but by a careful preservation of three or four grains of gunpowder, and the lock of a musket which he had broke up for the construction of his catamaran. The flesh and blood of wild beasts were his sole aliment—with the latter he quenched his thirst in seasons of long droughts, and the skulls of his departed companions were his only drinking vessels. The discovery made of him from the Charlotte was purely accidental; the rock was known to be desolate and barren, and the appearance of a fire, as the vessel passed it on an evening attracted notice, and produced an enquiry, which proved fortunate to the forlorn inhabitant, in procuring his removal to Nooaheevah, where he was left under the care of Mr. Wilson, an European, who had resided there many years, and who had previously known him.”

LATEST FROM CAPE HENRY, (HAWTI)

The notice is published to the public attention of Mr. D'Arcy, of this city, for an official report of an accident which occurred in Hawti, received by him in a letter from his friend in Cape Henry, dated the 27th of August.

N. Y. Gaz.

Extract of a letter dated San Soel, Aug. 26, 1818, at mid day.

“I have just received from an officer of the garrison, who was on the spot, an account of the accident which befell the Citadel Henry last night.”

“About 2 o'clock, P. M. of the 25th, the sky became very much overcast, and the accumulation of dense clouds on the summits of the high peaks, which surround the Citadel Henry, portended a furious tempest. The largest trees bent before the violence and impetuosity of the winds. This continued till about 4 o'clock, when the rain began to fall accompanied by incessant lightning. About a quarter of an hour after, a flash of lightning struck the highest point of the citadel about 100 paces from the nearest lightning rod, thence passing in a direct line in front of the great postern, it crossed the guard-house of the garrison, without doing any mischief and finally exploded in the laboratory (salle de arriere) which stands in the rear of the buildings situated on the side whence the wind blew. This building contained a great quantity of projectiles, which had been preparing for some days past, and which time had not allowed to be secured in the magazines. A terrible explosion took place, which set fire to the neighboring buildings. The wind continued to rage and the rain to fall. The Governor and the officers had taken shelter in their respective apartments, and only discovered the impending danger by the blaze of the extended conflagration.

The governor immediately sallied forth with such of the garrison as he could collect about him, he saw the damage done by the explosion and the impossibility of extinguishing the wide-spreading flames, which raged with astonishing fury. Every one therefore, sought his own safety, and made for those posterns which led to the vaulted batteries; many had the good fortune to reach them, but others, through terror, lost their way and either perished, or were wounded.

King Henry, who was then at Sans Souci, received the news of this dreadful event, only two hours after it took place. About 6 o'clock in the afternoon, an officer of the garrison gave him the information. He immediately repaired to the citadel, accompanied by the

officers of his staff, followed by 6,000 of his guards, besides the troops of the line in the neighboring garrisons, and arrived in time to save a part of the buildings. The powder magazines, which contain 3,000,000 lbs powder, the vaulted armories and batteries, have escaped destruction. In fine, only those buildings which stood exposed in open air, within the fort, have been destroyed; all else is uninjured, and the citadel remains in its former state of defence.

We have to deplore the loss of the governor, his royal highness the duke of Port-de-Paix, greatly regretted by the king—besides that of the brave soldiers to whom the defence of the bulwark was entrusted.

His majesty is now occupied in superintending the removal of the rubbish of the buildings destroyed, which he intends to have rebuilt more solidly and securely. But little time will be necessary to effect this, with the numbers and activity employed about it.”

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS. NEW YORK, SEPT. 14. LATEST FROM ENGLAND.

“By the arrival yesterday morning of the fine British brig Edward Byam, from Liverpool, whence she sailed on the 16th of August, the editors of the Mercantile Advertiser have received London papers to the 13th, and a Lloyd's List of the 11th of that month. We learn from captain Leader that there had been no arrivals at Liverpool from the United States on the last four or five days previous to his sailing.

British Stock, Aug. 13.—3 per cent. Cons. 77 1/2 14 7/7 Onium, 07 3 1/4 9 dls.

LONDON, Aug. 13. Her Majesty continues so much better, that on Tuesday evening she rode out for half an hour. It is generally understood that she has undergone an operation by which the water on her chest has been withdrawn.

Mr. Kean, the actor, and his fellow traveller have been nearly dashed to atoms on their way to Geneva, by the breaking down of their carriage.

Capt. Naira, of a whaling ship, writes 7th ult. that on the 10th June, in lat. 80 2, he spoke the Discovery ships, and was informed, that the highest latitude they had reached, was 80 22; that they could find no passage farther to the northward on the west side of Spitzbergen, and that when last seen they were steering S W.

We have received the Paris papers of Monday. It is stated under the head of Madrid, that the plague has broken out at Scutari, Durazzo, and Montenegro, on the coast of Albania.

An article from Stockholm, states that three vessels are fitting out for the coast of Africa—one of these is destined for Algiers; one for Tripoli with 30 24 pounders and 19000 balls on board, and the other for Tunis with 24 guns of the same calibre and other warlike stores—believed to be intended as tributes from the Swedish government to the Barbary powers.

A Brussels paper states that the royal of Soult, David, and some other distinguished partisans of Bonaparte, banished from the French territory, is again spoken of.

We have received New York papers to the 16th July.

London, Aug. 11.—The formal renunciation of the French territory is reserved for the fiat of the Sovereign at the approaching Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle. The measure is, however, already agreed upon, and October has been for some time designated as the first period when it is to take effect. In the week of that month, it understood the allied troops will concentrate and move off together. Count Woroncew comes over to England the moment that his contingent marches home.—The emperor Alexander is to be at Marburg by the latter part of next month, and the Russian corps will reach the Polish frontier about the first of January.

Within these few days hay has been sold at Worcester at 7 per ton; at Birmingham, it has reached 79.

Paris, Aug. 8. The bookseller L'Hallier, was arrested yesterday and conducted to the Conciergerie, to which he has been sentenced on the first process of the Grey Man.

The exercises of the Austrian artillery stationed at Hagenau will commence the 10th of Aug. and terminate on the 19th. The Harvest in Germany is not very abundant. The continuance of the great heats is detrimental to the pulse.

Spain, July 21.—During the incertitude of the government, relative to the hostile disposition which the United States have unceasingly manifested towards Spain, it appears certain that the fine squadron which is equipping in the port of Cadix (composed of the ships ceded to us by Russia, and such of our own as have escaped destruction) will not sail for South America until the government can determine the footing of our relations with North America. This squadron consists of 8 ships of the line, several large frigates, and a proportionate number of corvettes—the crews are complete. The force is almost wholly armed and equipped, and commanded by the best navy officers of the country.

Hague, Aug 5. There has just been published at Amsterdam, the plan of a society of Commerce and Navigation, a licence for which has been granted by his majesty.

The Paris papers also mention, that eighty houses had lately been destroyed by fire, and 400 families reduced to misery, in the village of St. Sulpice, situated in the department of Cote d'Or.

Paris, August 4.—It is reported, that a convoy of 14 Spanish vessels, which sailed from Cadix the 24th of June last, have all been captured by the insurgent privateers, cruising in the latitude of St. Vincent. It is further said, that the crews, which were put on board one of the captured vessels, have landed near Vigo.

Hamborough, July 28.—An English ship returned from Greenland reports its having met the Polar expedition near Spitzbergen, in lat. 79 34, all the crew in good health. Capt. Kotzbu, who is doubtless at present at Cronstadt, could only reach to 60, on the side of the Behring's Straits, where he was impeded in his further progress by an icy barrier. He could neither double Cape Szalatskoi, in Asia, nor the icy cape in America.

The last Russian charts indicate, that from discoveries made upon the spot, New Siberia is not a continent, but a groupe of three large islands, which extended as far as the 77th degree, and on the other side of which is seen a sea of ice.

This circumstance seems to confirm the hypothesis, that Greenland is only a large island, that the bay called Baffin is open on the North side—and that there is no continent under the Poles. According to the Russian charts, it also appears, that the coasts of Siberia had been placed a little too much to the northward.

London, August 8.—The following notice has been struck up in Stock Exchange:—

“Conversion of Exchequer Bills into Three per cent. Consolidated and Reduced Annuities.”

“Certificates in which the installment due on the 1st day of August has been paid are now ready for delivery.

“The future instalments are to be made either in Exchequer Bills, dated before the 1st of August, 1818, on which day the interest thereon will cease, or by a payment in money—in which case 101 money must be paid in lieu of each 100 of Exchequer Bills, and interest must also be paid on the 2d per diem upon each 101 money, to be computed from the 1st August to the day of payment.”

LONDON, JULY 31.

RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY.

Proportion of the debt and resources of this country at the present and former periods.

Upon the accession of George the First, in 1714, the debt amounted to 164,145,363; the same debt, as it stood on the 1st of February, 1817, had accumulated to 1819,536,987. The reign of George I, embraced a period of 12 years, 10 months, and 10 days, during which the whole sum produced by the customs was 121,632,985; and by the excise 130,421,451. Now the articles subject to customs and excise, are such as the majority of a nation never purchase till they are provided with other commodities of more indispensable necessity.—The increase of the former keeps pace with

the increase of the national wealth, and prohibits a certain demonstration of that increase. The customs for the year ending the 5th of January, 1816, amounted to 140,487,522; the excise duties, during the same interval produced 136,562,432: the then existing war duties are included in this amount.—Here the customs for one year will be found to have produced nearly as much as they did in six years of the reign of George I, and the excise, during one year of the present reign, amounted to a sum equal to about five sixths of the total produce, during a period of more than twelve years, in the above mentioned reign. The produce of the stamps may not be thought to furnish so sure a test of national wealth, as that of the customs and excise; but yet as they are an index of a multifarious class of dealings, betwixt man and man, they may serve to elucidate the amount of the circulating wealth during any particular period. If we compare the amount of the stamp duty in George I, with that in the present reign, we shall be forcibly struck with the disparity. During the latter part of George I, the stamps produced the annual sum of 132,665; whilst between 5th Jan. 1816, and 5th Jan. 1817, they amounted to 15,965,434, or near six millions sterling.—Notwithstanding the immense increase in the scale of the stamp duty, which has taken place in the present reign, we must recollect that it is the increased opulence and multiplied dealings of the country which have enabled it to bear this increase; and it must at the same time be considered, that though the payment of the duty is compulsory upon particular legal and commercial transactions, those transactions themselves are optional; and that therefore the payment of the duty itself being so far spontaneous, the increase on that duty can be owing to nothing but the prosperity of the country. The increased revenue of the post office furnishes a signal proof not only of the increased civilization, but of the increased wealth of the country within the last century. In the four last years of George I, the post-office produced an average of 175,445 in the year. In the year ending the 5th Jan. 1817, the same source of revenue yielded no less than 11,426,300. Here we have much more than a decuple increase, and in a species of voluntary payment, which furnishes a striking criterion of affluence. A national debt must be considered as great or small according to the wealth of the people by whom it has been incurred, and out of which it is to be paid. A debt of one million to a poor country may be more than a debt of ten millions to a rich; as one individual may be much less distressed by a debt of a thousand, than another may be by a debt of one hundred, or even only ten pounds.

Balegh.

FRIDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 18, 1818.

PENITENTIARY SYSTEM.—In the last number of this paper, an article was copied from the Halifax Courier; which, among other topics for legislative discussion at the approaching session, touched upon that of the projected penitentiary.—Perhaps the editor was singular in condemning, so unreservedly, this mode of punishment.—Yet it must be confessed there are many strong grounds of dissent to the policy of its introduction among us. Many philanthropic men, reflecting upon the sanguinary character of our code of criminal law, have been willing to ameliorate its features almost upon any terms. A penitentiary system presented itself as the most obvious resort; and the economical recommendation it carried with it, went not a little way towards gaining it friends among the members of a legislature never inattentive to the duty of guarding the public purse. A kind of mixed principle, however, half made up of the common aversion from change, and half of a heathen antipathy to horse-thieves—has always held a majority in favor of the hanging penalty—and the state has consequently wavered the tempting expedient of adding to its revenue by the labor of its culprits.

But should the determination against the penitentiary as a means of softening the harshness of too bloody punishments, induce one to believe that the community, the citizens of the state, remain satisfied with these cruel statutes as they are?—I think not. There is certainly a leaning among the wise and good towards the plan that has been rejected; and but that there must be something defective in the details of that plan I believe it would receive the hearty assent of the people of North Carolina. The conception is excellent—yet in the opinion of many the modifications are erroneous.

A few thoughts bestowed on this interesting concern may not be amiss. First then:—the object sought by society in awarding punishments at all, is the protection of its members from injury by crime. Secondly: in the penalty assigned to deter criminals from action, by example and awful threatening, the aim must be to give that penalty such a portion of humanity as may best reconcile, with public safety, mercy towards the guilty. Thirdly, it must be a plan policy to render the system as lightly taxable upon the community as possible. In three words, penal inflictions should as far as possible reconcile justice, mercy and economy. The legislator who can devise the best plan for doing this, will be a benefactor of his kind and the admiration of posterity. It certainly has never yet been completely effected. But we shall easily find that the attempts of our sister states have given in the most particular a satisfactory result. The convicts have been taught to support themselves; and the states have even drawn a surplus from their labor, over and above. Yet, alas, this is the fairest side of the picture.—It has not been rendered so clear that the safety of society was advanced; or the condition of debased human nature improved in the process. De Witt Clinton's message to the legislature of New-York gives a most woeful evidence of the reverse; and there are few men more able to collect facts with care or to weigh information better. There is, then, some radical defect