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Political.

From the National Intelligencer. The following communication is from a respectable source, and the facts are vouched for by a responsible name. It is of a nature which, its nature alone considered, would have excluded it from our columns. But, as we have once already had occasion to remark, the dispute has too much national importance to be regarded as a private controversy; but not, in our opinion, the less on that account to be deprecated. It is high time that an end was put to these feuds, characterised by an animosity less to be admired than the enmity of open warfare, but almost equally fatal in its consequences.

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 18, 1820.

GENTLEMEN: I have observed, within a paragraph in Lang's Gazette of the 16th, received this morning, purporting to be an extract from the London Courier, in which it is alleged that the Governor of Gibraltar had suggested to the commander of the American squadron the propriety of our vessels of war not entering that port; and that this proposition had been acceded to by Captain Brown, in consequence of the increased animosity between the 64th regiment and the officers of the American squadron. The Courier is well known to be in the hands of the British ministry, and whenever appears there of a national or political character, is considered as almost official. It is a paper from which some editors in this country quote with a peculiar eagerness, and in the oracles of which some readers, and American readers too, hold it a merit to place an implicit faith. Whether this paragraph originated with the officers at Gibraltar, the ministry at home, or the editor of the Courier, it may safely be denounced as false and malicious, upon the authority of the following statement of facts. They are derived from unquestionable authority and were transmitted to this country by an old resident at Gibraltar, well acquainted with all the parties, and a gentleman of superior intelligence and sterling integrity.

Lieutenant Downing, of the Guerriere, had been tried by a court martial, on charges founded upon a complaint of Lt. Smith of the 17th regiment, and acquitted, and resorted to duty by Com. Stewart. Soon after the Franklin sailed, Lieut. Downing, accompanied by his friend, Lieut. Griffin of the Peacock, went on shore, in uniform, and to the mess house of the 27th, for the purpose of giving notice to the officers of that regiment how improperly Lieut. Smith had conducted towards him, both before and at the court martial. This is the only practicable mode in Gibraltar of posting and publishing an English officer, and it has been uniformly adopted, and without offence to any other than the particular offence denounced. The regiment was on parade, and Downing and Griffin found only two captains of the 27th to whom the object of the visit was made known. Downing said that Smith had behaved unlike a man of spirit or honor, in making a personal controversy, which he had promised should be privately adjusted, a subject of public complaint and judicial investigation; that he did not consider him, nor should he treat him, as an officer or a gentleman, for he had perjured himself as a witness on the trial of his own complaint. The captain requested that this communication should be made to Smith himself, and an effort was made by Griffin to bring him to the mess house, but he was on post at the Ragged Staff, and could not or would not leave it. He was told a message would be left there for him, & Griffin returned to his friend & the captains, and said that Lieut. Smith could not leave his post. Downing then requested the captains to make known to Smith particularly, and their mess mates generally, what he had said, and added, that if Smith belonged to the American army or navy he would not be allowed to disgrace it another day. They were received and treated by these captains with the greatest courtesy and parted on polite terms. Downing and Griffin took a turn or two to look at the regiment, and soon after went on board their ships.

The next morning, Captain Brown (in the temporary command of the squadron) received despatch from Gov. Don, containing a letter from Colonel Henry, of the 27th, complaining that Downing had been seen on shore and out of arrest.

The Governor stated that he had not been advised of the result of that trial, and therefore should forbid Lieutenant Downing's being admitted to garrison. Captain Brown replied, that Downing had been restored to duty by Commodore Stewart, pursuant to the sentence of a court martial, and he could not think it just to forbid his entering the garrison merely because he had appeared there out of arrest. The Governor rejoined, it was not on that account alone, but because he endangered the peace of the garrison and wished Capt. B. to order D. not to enter it; and this was done.

After Downing had been restricted in this manner two days, and the fact was generally known on shore, Lieut. Shea, of the 27th, came on board the Guerriere, and delivered Downing a challenge from Smith. This was refused by the advice of D.'s friends that Smith had forfeited his claim to the character of a gentleman by the conduct mentioned; but Shea was assured that if any friend of Smith's would espouse his quarrel, he should be accommodated. Shea said he had not come to fight for Smith; that he was esteemed in the regiment as a gentleman and a brave man, and able to fight his battles. This visit was repeated the next day, and the day after, and nearly the same conversations took place. At the second interview, Shea said that Smith's conduct was approved by Gen. Don, and the regiment, and at the third, threatened Downing with consequences, intimating that he would be published or posted. Still D. refused to meet Smith, or acknowledge him as a gentleman. When Shea had left the ship the last time, Lieutenant D. said, in Downing's presence, that he had no better opinion of Smith than he had, but, as he appeared to be held a gentleman by the officers about him, he would fight him himself sooner than have a newspaper war about such an affair. Downing said, if any gentleman would fight Smith, he was bound to do so, and, against the advice of all his other friends, sent Griffin to Shea to enquire if Smith had a friend who was willing in this case to fight for him, and if there should be none, to say Downing would meet Smith himself.

They accordingly met that afternoon, at 3 o'clock, on the natural ground and exchanged three shots: Downing striking every fire, twice slightly, and once very severely; Smith missed every shot. There were a number of soldiers and citizens, and more than a dozen British officers, present at this meeting, and it was to every regiment in the garrison to be about to take place. Downing and his attendants speak in terms of high commendation of the conduct of their antagonists on the ground, and especially of the assistance rendered them by the officers in passing and re-passing their guards and sentries to regain their boat.

Upon this result, the Governor interdicted all intercourse between the squadron and the garrison. This was submitted to by the American officers, without complaint, and by them it was most scrupulously observed. With regard to them, too, it was enforced by the Governor with military rigour of a place besieged. If the commander of the squadron wishes to communicate with the navy agent or the consul of his government at Gibraltar, he must now to the water port gate, and report himself to the inspector of stragglers, and request permission to enter; the inspector reports the application to the town major, whose office is near two miles distant; the town major reports it to the Governor, who is probably at the cottage about three miles off, or at the Convent, which is at the extremity of the town, opposite to Water Port, and the Governor directs a permit to be issued, or not, as he pleases. During all this time, the American commodore sits in his boat, rain or shine, watched by the sentry on post at the dock. To this humiliating ceremony Captain Brown has refused to submit, but to this ceremony the agent and the consul are compelled to submit, when they would communicate with the squadron of their country.

On Sunday morning, Captain Thompson was sitting with his wife and child in the cabin of the Guerriere, unprepared for other company than his own officers, and relying on the non-intercourse as security against visits from the shore. Two gentlemen from the garrison were announced to be on deck, and desirous to see the captain. They were invited down, and shown into the cabin. They were both strangers to the captain Thompson, but discovered themselves and their business at once. One was Captain Johnson and the other Dr. — both of the 64th regiment. Without intimating a wish to see captain T. in private, or that his wife might withdraw, or that their purpose was hostile or unpleasant in its character, Johnson addressed him to this effect: "It is asserted on shore, and it is generally believed, that it is your wish to give a national tone to the quarrels between your officers and those of the garrison; at least, it is thought so by our regiment; our officers began the war with the

American officers, and we are resolved to go through with it and finish it. Accordingly, sir, I am charged to present you the compliments of Major Dickson of the 64th, and to beg you will do him the favor to give him a meeting on the neutral ground this afternoon, at 4 o'clock, at two paces; and I offer the same terms to your Lieut. Downing. You are very successful at your own distance, you may not be so at ours." By this time, Mrs. Thompson was in fits, and her little daughter screaming with fright. Captain Thompson complained that they had done him great injustice in imputing to him feelings or wishes in any degree hostile or unfriendly to the British officers; disclaimed ever having expressed or entertained the wish ascribed to him—and sent for his first and second lieutenants, Gordon and Dulany to come into the cabin, that they might be witnesses to the conversation. He repeated his disavowal of all hostile feelings or wishes, and his Lieutenant did the same. The fight, and on the own terms was now urged upon captain Thompson with great warmth and insisted upon by Johnson and the surgeon as unavoidable. Captain T. said, if you will force me into this controversy against my wishes and under this disavowal of mine, I will enter into it, and upon your own plan. You have singled me out as the principal object of resentment and attack, merely because I command the ship to which Lieut. Downing is attached, and you are resolved to array all the officers of the 64th, and bring mine to the field against them. I claim the right, as the party assailed, to select my antagonists; I take the commander of your regiment, Colonel McCombe; now bring him to the field as soon as you please; I am ready to meet him on your own terms. This was objected to because McCombe was an old man, and a man of family. The reply was, he is not an old man, and you have paid no regard to me, gentlemen, as a man of family. Lieutenant Gordon in point of rank now claimed Dickson for his opponent, and lieutenant Dulany tendered his services to Johnson; both at two paces, or two inches, and as soon as they liked. The English officers were not prepared for this overture; they could not accede to it; they would communicate it to the officers of the 64th, and return immediately with the result; before noon they left the ship; and did not return during that day. Captain Brown was ignorant of this transaction on board the Guerriere, but, as an evidence of his own pacific disposition, he ordered that ship and the brig Spark to sea, remaining in the Peacock shoal. The Guerriere got under weigh in the morning, but was becalmed under the Algeiras shore till 11 o'clock, where she was visited by an American gentleman, and many of these facts were ascertained. Capt. Thompson and his officers were surprised that Johnson had neither returned nor communicated with them upon their proposals. This gentleman brought a letter from captain T. to Col. McCombe, advising him of all that had transpired; disclaiming upon the feelings and wishes imputed to him; giving him notice of the selection he had made of an antagonist; and making him the guardian of his good name during an absence he could not avoid. He also brought a letter from Downing to Johnson, acknowledging his polite remembrance of him the day before, and promising a more just return to his good manners when he should get back to Gibraltar.

The triumphant exultation and hearty congratulations and shaking of hands that ensued upon the sailing of the Guerriere never was paralleled in the streets of Gibraltar. Fradegar and Waterloo induced no such excitement or elation. Colonels, majors, captains, subalterns, non-commissioned officers, musicians, privates, and civilians, great and small, were grouped at corners of streets, upon side walks, in shops, in basement entries, any where, every where, all inquiring, do you know the Guerriere's off, and do you know the reason? Her officers have all been challenged to fight at two paces and she's off! It was now discovered that the "war" was not confined to the 64th, but was undertaken and carried on by all the unmarried officers of the garrison, amounting to two hundred. These gentlemen entered into a combination to call out all the officers of the Guerriere, and all of the squadron, should it prove necessary. They resolved to begin with Thompson and Downing; to fight at two paces; to begin as soon as possible, and to cast lots for who should begin. The majors threw for Thompson, and Dickson of the 64th, won it, the captains for Downing, and Johnson of the 64th was lucky enough to get it. A remark upon General Don's conduct may not be deemed impertinent. At his instance, Downing was restrained in his liberty, and as soon as this is well understood, one of the general's officers seeks him within his limits, and provokes him to leave them. Another lieutenant of his meets and fights him, and gets se-

verely wounded. Twenty British officers and soldiers are present and openly assist him in repassing their sentries to regain his boat. Under a non-intercourse of great rigor betwixt the squadron and the shore, a captain and a surgeon of the generals are allowed to pass and re-pass their sentries from the garrison to the Guerriere, and upon errands of kindness and amity like that to Captain Thompson. All this, however, might be endured; but that Gov. Don, at his time of life, and in the post he holds, should so far enter into these controversies, as to complain to his government in terms of bitter reproach against the conduct of the American officers, his guests in a degree, and at the same time overlook entirely the outrageous bullying, and disobedient, conduct of his own, is strange—but, I am sorry to say, it is true. A notorious combination of 200 officers, in a garrison not 500 strong, as been entered into for the purpose of trying to kill a captain and four lieutenants, in the naval service of a friendly state. This end might have been achieved & was almost begun, and failed from no unwillingness on the part of the captain and his lieutenants to try the issue.—This combination is boasted of as a noble and gallant and successful undertaking, by all the officers of the garrison and all the residents (British) within his command, and yet General Don stirs not a peg to restrain or check it, or to punish those concerned in it. Two hundred unmarried officers make war upon five American officers under his nose, & select for their first victim a married man with a family; and these 200 challengers are so chivalrous as to claim, from the five challenged, nothing more than choice of weapons, (and that the shortest possible) of place, (and that within their own entries) of distance, (and that one which they profess edly look to for advantage). What else could they have claimed, but permission to fire without being shot at?

I apprehend, gentlemen, the paragraph in the Courier should therefore read thus: "The American squadron have left their anchorage before Gibraltar, owing to the friendly regard and polite attentions of General Don who had forbidden all intercourse to the squadron with the town, where their principal supplies were deposited; denied to them the common courtesies of hospitality shown to the ships of all other states; and treated the commander with indignities that the patron of a Barbary felucca would not submit to. This generous conduct of the general is to be imputed to an insupportable spirit of hostility that has exhibited itself among the officers of the 64th regiment against the commissioned officers of the Guerriere, which threatened for a few hours to expose the 64th to being shot, and a sign a protestation against the constitutionality of this act of the Legislature, which, according to their doctrine, militates against the fundamental principles of the charter. This protestation signed, the great majority of the party appeared on withdrawing from Parliament, as Mr. Fox and his friends once did in England. It is presumed that a measure of this nature will rouse the public mind to active co-operation."

A CITIZEN.

Foreign.

FOREIGN NEWS. The foreign Selections, which we present in this paper, are principally from Bell's (London) Weekly Messenger; and reached through the (Philadelphia) National Gazette. The following remarks by Mr. WALSH, the editor of that paper, are certainly very correct, and not without interest. Nothing could tend more to expose the nakedness of the boat, than the consequences given to such expressions of popular opinion, as are made the subjects of prosecution. We have collected some articles for insertion in our second page, from a series of London papers for April to the 17th inclusive.—There is little else in them than histories of radical insurrection, and reports of trials in the criminal courts. All attention in Great Britain seems absorbed by these concerns, and this is natural as regards the bulk of the nation; but we are surprised that the editors of the principal newspapers do not reflect upon the impression concerning the national character and situation, which is likely to be made abroad by the nature of the matter, to which they thus devote their columns. How must the Cabinet ministers of the Continent be affected when they open the Courier, to find such an interminable story of petty and ignoble incidents, instead of the highest subjects, with which they might expect to be entertained by an article of the British empire? Our papers offer, for instance, various cases of trial and conviction and sentence of long imprisonment, for seditious expressions of this nature. "The Prince Regent is a d—d scoundrel and a villain." "The whole body of the Duke of Kent was not worth a pennyworth of liver." "The King is a d—d vagabond for keeping company with such rogues as Castlereagh and George Canning." The utterers of these alarming phrases are of the lowest class of the vulgar, and the Judges deal with them as solemnly

as if they were Russels and Sidneys—How pitiable that the majesty, political and juridical, of a mighty nation, should be occupied with such game!—Two guineas were given for a seat at the trial of Thistlewood, the City street conspirator.—The funds fell when intelligence was received in London of the Scottish riots. We observe that the Report concerning the relations of the U. S. to Spain, made March 9th, by the Committee of Foreign Relations of our House of Representatives, is published at large in the Courier of the 14th of April, and that it is spoken of as arrogant in its language.

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS. FROM LATE LONDON PAPERS. Extract of a private letter dated Paris, April 1.

The debates in the Chamber, on the restrictive laws which have just been sanctioned by the majority, have visibly augmented the fermentation which prevails through the Departments. The news from Spain has singularly irritated the popular feeling, and the opposition journals announce, that, in several large towns, both in Germany and Italy, the people stimulated by the example of what has taken place at Madrid, demand Constitutions. The correspondents of the principal commercial houses of the capital, prove that there is no ground whatever for these assertions, and that especially in Portugal, the authority of government has never been for an instant admitted; yet these erroneous rumors, designedly propagated, do not fail producing a mischievous effect. Whether the government has in its power the means, and with the means, the energy, of successfully combating those who seem already in a rebellious array against it, is to many problematical. It is reported that the French army is to receive a new organization, the legions are to be suppressed, and the regiments of the line alone preserved. The opposition maintain that the part the Spanish army has acted, should be a lesson for France; on the other hand, it is asserted that no comparison can be established, since, independently of local circumstances, the French soldier is exactly and fully paid, while the Spanish army, from the sterility of the treasury, literally received nothing.

The Cole gauches, satisfied with the publicity which the journals of their party have given to their doctrines, (never so freely, and I may add, so ably developed, as during the late discussions,) seem resolved on maintaining the position they occupy, until the proposition of the new election law. It is rumored that their intention then is, after having exhausted all eloquence and reason ineluctably, as they foresee and reason ineluctably, to expose the 64th to being shot, and a sign a protestation against the constitutionality of this act of the Legislature, which, according to their doctrine, militates against the fundamental principles of the charter. This protestation signed, the great majority of the party appeared on withdrawing from Parliament, as Mr. Fox and his friends once did in England. It is presumed that a measure of this nature will rouse the public mind to active co-operation.

The ministry have resolved on making retrocessions to such an extent that the members of the legion of honor, beginning with the lowest class, will be paid for the future the integral amount of their pensions.

The following is an interesting letter relating to the affairs of Spain, in the northern part of the country.

BILBAO, MARCH 22.

We got to Santago the day after the promulgation of the new constitution, and found every thing very different to what one experiences traveling through other parts of Spain. The gates were open—no guards and no precautions—and we proceeded to the Pasado without a single enquiry. All through the streets every body appeared joyful and full of conversation. We could hardly imagine that so important an affair as a revolution had taken place, and that, only the preceding day. The people were glad beyond measure; but they hardly knew how to believe their senses. The Governor (ad interim) Acevedo, told us that in all the province of Galicia, excepting at Orense, we should be as free as in England; but in those situations where the King still retained his authority, we should meet with impediments.

The people here, (Bilbao,) begin to breathe again. Their expectations are very high as to the benefits they will derive from the glorious change, the more so as it has been brought about without the shedding of one drop of blood, at least in this direction; but it has terminated so unexpectedly that the Ministers newly appointed are unprepared for such an event, and we must await some little time till they decide on the best measures to be adopted. An order came out, dated 6th March, permitting

\* But the Colonel Acevedo here mentioned, was killed by a bullet a day or two afterwards, while endeavoring to bring over the fugitives of who had refused to acknowledge the Constitution.—Ed. Phil. Union