

Highland Messenger.

VOL. V--NO. 31

ASHEVILLE, N. C., FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 1845.

THOS. W. ATKIN,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

TERMS OF THE MESSENGER:
Two Dollars and Fifty Cents per annum in advance, or THREE DOLLARS within the year.
No paper will be discontinued, except at the option of the Editor, until all arrears are paid.
Advertisements will be inserted at ONE DOLLAR per square of ten lines or less, for the first insertion, and Twenty-five Cents for each continuance.—The number of insertions desired must be marked on the margin, or the advertisement will be continued till paid, and charged accordingly. Court Orders will be charged twenty-five per cent extra.
The charge for announcing the name of a candidate for office is \$2 50, in advance, or \$3 00 if payment be delayed.
Letters to the Editor must come free of postage, to insure attention.

Dr. Mitchell's Second Letter.

To Hon. Thomas L. Clingman:
DEAR SIR—It will be long before the mountains of North Carolina will be fully explored, and their mineral contents ascertained. The parts which are too steep, or too much encumbered with rocks to be cultivated, will be too high to be traversed except by farmers looking for wild cattle, or by hunters in pursuit of game. In either case the surface will be so covered with brushwood and leaves as to prevent the discovery of the valuable minerals which may be there. It could not with reason be expected over a careful geological survey, that it would result in many important discoveries. Its principal benefit would be, here, as it has been elsewhere, to draw the attention of the inhabitants to the subjects of minerals, and by making them acquainted with a few species, prepare them to examine and discover for themselves—to make every intelligent man in fact a mineral surveyor, more or less able of his own farm and neighborhood. With a view to such a condition of things, I offer a record of a few facts of a very miscellaneous character, that have fallen under my own observation in regard to the rocks and minerals of the mountains.

It is well known that the western part of North Carolina is made up of ancient primitive, and Tennessee of more recent rock formations. The boundary between these two is generally, perhaps always, within the State of North Carolina, and at no great distance from the line separating the two States. Between Ashe and Carter counties it may, at some points cross the border, so as to give a few primitive rocks to Tennessee. On the other hand, a long tongue from the formations of Tennessee enters North Carolina by the Watuga River, the Beech Mountain, Grandfather, and Linville, and extends quite down to the Catawba in McDowell county. What follows relates exclusively to the region of the primitive rocks.

The three principal kinds of these rocks, Granite, Gneiss, and Mica Slate, are so intermingled and associated that it will be a work of much labor to ascertain the different fields of each, and the limits of those fields. Gneiss, and especially the hornblende variety, appears to be more abundant than the others. Of this the Black Mountain is principally composed. I saw more mica slate in Henderson (some containing imperfect garnets,) than anywhere else. A coarse grained granite abounds in Yancey county towards the head waters of Toe River, and on the road leading from Burnsville to the Turkey Cove.—This is the kind that yields the materials of porcelain. When it has been so far decomposed that all the potassa is removed, the white, infusible mass that remains is the Kaolin, whilst the Feldspar, unchanged, is the Petuntse of the Chinese. When these two are reduced to fine powder, mixed, wrought into vessels, and baked with an intense heat, the fusion of the feldspar gives to the material so formed the transparency that belongs to porcelain. I found small masses of Kaolin near Thomas Young's, in Yancey county, some years since, and during the present year a bed of it as white as snow was struck in digging a well at Burnsville. A body of beautiful feldspar, free from any intermixture of other minerals, has been observed on the lands of Mr. McKinney, in Cashier's Valley, Macon county. Neither of these may be of much value either now or at any future time, but they encourage the belief that the materials of porcelain of a good quality will be found abundantly in some of these counties.

Serpentine.—Besides two in Ashe, whose precise locality I cannot give, I know of five considerable beds of this rock in the western counties: one on the waters of Cane Creek, near the Baker settlement; a second near Pigeon Young's, but on the side of Toe River opposite to his house; a third at the ford of Toe on the road from Burnsville to Asheville; a fourth on the lands of Enoch Hall, near the head of Hominy, in Haywood county; and the fifth at the ford of Tuckaseige, in Haywood and Macon. In all these places it is a soft, fibrous rock, but interesting from the minerals associated with it.

Chromite.—Chemists are unable to account for the quality of certain kinds of iron ore, the very best from that iron ore, of Dannemora, in Sweden; the whole of which is sent to England to be converted into iron. I quote the following passage from Scrivener's History of the Iron Trade, page 161:

"The cause of the superiority of the Dannemora iron has never been explained. Some chemists ascribe it to the presence of manganese. Bevalius attributed it to the presence of the metal of silice, while others suppose it to arise from the nature of the process employed. Dr. Thomson was assured by one gentleman, who had bestowed particular attention to the subject, that by following a similar process he has obtained as good iron from other Swedish ores. But that something is due to the ore itself, is evident from the circumstance that the quality of the iron, though the same process is followed, differs a good deal according to the part of the vein from which the ore is taken."

From some unknown cause the iron made at the Cranberry Works, in the northern part of Yancey, is, as I am assured by people who have used it, of an excellent quality—hard and tough. As there is an abundance of ore at this locality, it bids fair to be the seat of an industry like profitable to the proprietors and useful to the population of the county, for a long period.

I have visited no other ore bed, and do not believe that iron is abundant in this region, but I may be mistaken. Mr. Johnston, of Waynesville, gave me a very rich specimen of the magnetic oxide, from Spring Creek, in Buncombe. In 1827 I saw in the hands of Mr. Roche, in Salisbury, a specimen of the Spatheic Iron ore, which he told me had been sent to him from Fine's Creek, in Haywood county. This is the most valuable of all the ores of iron, as very tolerable steel can be manufactured directly from it. I have never been able to visit the spot from which it is said to have come, and in answer to my enquiries for iron ore from that quarter, have had presented to me Foliated Anthophyllite from the Rich Mountain. This was what I had from Dr. Hardy, at Asheville, Mr. Osborn, on Pigeon River, and Mr. Johnston, at Waynesville. Such specimens as I have seen are of no value, the quantity of iron being small, and the rock in which it is imbedded so refractory that it would be wrought with great difficulty. The thing is worth looking into. I have sent a small specimen of true Spatheic ore to Mr. Johnston for comparison, and will forward another to Dr. Dickson, at Asheville, by the first opportunity.

Chromite Iron.—This is valuable only for the Chromium it contains. It occurs in small grains disseminated through the mass of Serpentine near Toe River, on the lands of the Messrs. Young, in Yancey county. As the rock is disintegrated by the weather, the grains fall out and may be collected in considerable quantities, but few that I have seen were larger than a pea. Mr. Enoch Hall, who lives five miles from the road, on the right hand as you go west, at the head of Hominy, gave me at Asheville a piece of yellowish serpentine that was full of small grains of the same substance. I have made chrome yellow from the ore of both places. That from Mr. Hall's land was put into a small glass tube and committed to the care of Mr. Francis, who kindly undertook to deliver it. If at either of these places, or elsewhere, considerable bodies of this chrome ore could be found, it would be worth attending to.

Asbestos. also, is found in connection with the Serpentine on Toe River—small octahedral crystals of iron ore and chalcocopy, with that on Ivy, near Solomon Carter's—and at the locality on the Tuckaseige, Cheloufouy (near's) creek, one who had been raised near the spot told me had been accustomed to call it himself and to hear it called by others—is so abundant that I have supposed it might at a future time be used for mill stones; a number of different pieces being bound together with iron hoops, as in the French Buhns.—The hardness and toughness of this mineral, and the cavities which that of the Tuckaseige contains seem to adapt it very well for this use. There is an abundance of it imbedded in the Serpentine, but the individual masses are not large.

Amianthus.—In the north western part of Yancey, on the waters of Cane Creek, is probably a larger body of the mineral commonly called asbestos, but by mineralogists amianthus, than is to be found elsewhere in the U. S. In some parts of the world the fibres of this "incombustible flax" are so tough and pliant that it can be wrought into a coarse and worthless cloth. That of Yancey separates readily into very minute filaments, but they are too brittle to sustain the force necessary to spin and weave them. I have supposed that this mineral might come into use in the manufacture of the safes that are employed in large cities for the preservation of valuable papers even when the building in which they are burnt down—and that the article could be furnished in greater quantity and of a better quality from North Carolina than from any other quarter. But not meeting with much success in the enquiries I made with reference to this point, I have perhaps treated the matter with too much neglect. Near the bed of amianthus is very fine black tourmaline, or schorl—of no value to any one but a professed mineralogist, and of but little to him. Coarse Kyanite occurs in Buncombe, on the road from Asheville to Waynesville, but the precise locality is not now recollected.

Gold, as is well known, is obtained in considerable quantities on the head waters of the Savannah River, on the south side of the Blue Ridge, but within the limits of North Carolina. These deposits, or branch mines, are at an elevation of between three and four thousand feet above the sea. This is a very interesting region. It will be a fine grazing country in the course of a few years; the scenery is of the most romantic and impressive character—the quantity of the gold collected is considerable, and the mineralogist who should establish himself there and examine it thoroughly, might hope to be rewarded with interesting if not important discoveries. The rocks are generally of a gneissoid character, having the composition of granite and a structure more or less slaty. They afford fine specimens of their constituent minerals; considerable masses of pure feldspar and mica, and in the streams, rolled pebbles, of good size, of limpid quartz or rock crystal. In the gravel that is washed for gold two minerals occurring in grains have attracted so much attention as to have acquired distinct names amongst the workmen. These are the "red beads" and "steel points." They prove on examination to be varieties of garnet—one the common kind—for the other, which is always in irregular grains and would appear to be quite black but for the white sand adhering to it, I have not yet fixed certainly upon the appropriate name.

Zirconite. in fine, large crystals, is found in Henderson, on the road from the Flat Rock to Green River, and I noticed it chiefly with reference to the history of its discovery, as given me by Mr. Murray, the owner of the land on which it occurs, and in illustration of the manner in which other discoveries, and of more valuable substances, are likely to be made—by accident in many cases rather than the most careful search.

Some gentlemen from South Carolina, Mr. Poinsett amongst the rest, were superintending the construction of the Saluda road, and had their quarters for the time at Mr. Murray's. Dr. Howard, of Savannah, was also there, and it was during a ramble of some of these persons over the hills near his dwelling, whether in search of minerals or exercise was not stated, that the bright crystals of the Zirconite attracted the attention of Dr. Howard. As they occupy but a limited space on the steep side of a small mountain, a geologist might have traversed Henderson county for a long time and have examined it very faithfully without falling in with them.

You gave me, a year or two since, a white salt which appears as an effluvescence on some mountain or mountains, & believe of Haywood, which is supposed to be alum, and is used in dyeing by the people of the neighborhood. It belongs to the alum family but is quite different from the alum of commerce, being a double sulphate of alumina and the protosulfate of iron, instead of alumina and potassa or ammoniac. It will answer very well for dyeing the coarse stuff that are manufactured in the family for every day wear, but has very little commercial value. The beds of limestone near Asheville, I acknowledge with shame and sorrow I did not visit, and I have therefore nothing to say about them. One given me by Mr. W. Rice, from Bull creek or mountain, iron pyrites, of no value.

Scenery.—On the subject of the scenery of the mountains I will be merciful to the readers of the Messenger. It must be seen upon the spot, or transferred by the pencil and graver to paper, to be enjoyed. My own experience is that the image created in the mind by the most exact and perfect description bears no resemblance to that which it is supposed to represent. If the artist, who furnishes embellishments to our newspapers and almanacs would come to North Carolina for subjects they would provide something quite superior to what is commonly seen in such publications. And what a spot amongst the fertile valleys, the lonely glens, the crags, and cliffs of these wild mountains for a tale that would touch and rend any heart that is not hardened! I will just notice a few spots that are worthy of the attention of such as are in search of the sublime and beautiful. In more than one, the Black Mountain is an important and striking feature.

1. The Pilot, an outlier from the main range of mountains, is a gem in its place and of its kind, but in passing it on its return, after having been amongst the giants of the west, one feels a strong inclination to lift his foot and kick it over into the Yadkin.

2. I do not believe there is any town in the United States that will compare, for the beauty and grandeur of the views around it, with Morganton, in Burke county. We can hardly go amiss in search of good points for enjoying them, but perhaps the Lincoln road, as we come over the South Mountain, and descend towards the village, affords the best. On the left hand, at a distance of 25 or 30 miles, towers the long dark range of the Black Mountain; Linville, the Bewkahl, and Table Rock, the two latter, rising like castles from ranges of less elevation, are nearer, more in front, and picturesque objects by themselves. The small mountains east of the village, on the right hand, the Grandfather in

the distance, and Morganton, with the cultivated fields in its neighborhood directly before us. Such is the picture.

3. The late Judge Gaston is said to have been greatly affected when, riding from Marion to the Turkey Cove, he came to where he first had a full and good view of the cliffs and rugged sides of Linville; and the man of taste who travels the road after him will not wonder at his emotion.

4. The road to Burnsville, ascends the mountains by a long spur of the Blue Ridge—and what a ride it is along that spur! The deep valleys of the North and Turkey Coves creeks are below one—the Black Mountain is in full view, at a distance of 12 or 16 miles, and Linville not half as far. Just by the road, towards the top, a farmer has established himself, and has a whole yard full of wild, tough, hearty boys. Are they affected at all by the views on which their eyes rest every day that they live—is their taste refined and improved by that magnificence of nature which is around them? The enquiry is naturally suggested to one as he passes them.

5. The ascent of the mountains by the Hickory Nut Gap has been much admired, and with reason. There is a small stream, which, pouring over the brow of the mountain, falls I know not how many feet. I never thought much of this. It strikes me as only a drop. But take a point half a mile below Harris', at the ford of Green river, and the case is altered. We have seen the mountain at a distance, have been gradually approaching, and finally winding our way amongst them, until the road seems about to end at the foot of a long range of tremendous precipices. One notch only appears in this impassable barrier, and through this the path winds by the river's side. The Greeks called such passes or gorges Pylae Gates. I have thought that if the words "Gates of the Western World," meaning by the western world especially the States of Tennessee and Kentucky, could be cut in letters about twenty feet in height on the face of the perpendicular rocks, the inscription would be in harmony with the other parts of the scene.

6. The road by Howard's Gap affords a fine view of Tryon, Crowder's, King's, the Saluda, and Hogback mountains, and of a broad expanse of comparatively level country towards the south-east. Some of my legal friends, when they pass here, are fond of lingering about the crest of the ridge, that they may refresh themselves by the enjoyment of the beauties of nature.

7. The hill above the Swannano, two and a half miles from Asheville, on the road to the Flat Rock, affords one of the finest views in the mountains. Pisgah and the whole range of the Black are in sight—there is an amphitheatre of smaller mountains around the broad valley formed by the junction of the Swannano and French Broad, whilst the fertile low grounds of those streams add the beauties of cultivation to the wilder features of the prospect. This view is for the eye; it is too broad, too much wanting in individual objects standing out from the rest of the picture, for the pencil. The man who is not affected by it had best go home and conclude that if there is any charm in such prospects he was not made to enjoy it. I have observed that the eagle chews this kind of place to rest and chew the end. I have sometimes suspected that coolness is not their only object, that though they neither say nor write anything upon the subject, they have an eye for what is before them.

8. If one wishes to make a romantic excursion through the mountains, let him turn up the Tuckaseige on the ford on the road to Franklin. His path will be for two or three miles by the side of the river, a clear, bright, flashing stream; then through a country broken and mountainous, but fertile; next over the high pass of the Cully where and down to the river again. In the intermediate space it is said there are magnificent falls, and there has been a plan for altering the road, so as to make it lead closer along beside them; but here at an elevation of about 3000 feet, on the sandy banks of a deep and sluggish stream, but for the peaks around, one might suppose himself in the low country of North Carolina. The place recalls the likeness of Campbell.

And in the midst of romantic youth
What years of endless bliss are yet to show?
But mortal pleasures, what art thou in youth?
The transient pleasures, ere they pass in show.

Following the stream, we pass a "harri- come," some quarter of a mile in breadth, which will satisfy the most sceptical as to what the power of the wind is when its utmost strength is exerted. Over the ridge, we are on the head waters of the Swannano, and find a comfortable home and kind entertainers in Col. Zachary's, in the region of the gold mines.

The scenery here is a good deal as though the Pilot and the precipitous cliffs of the Hickory Nut had come on a visit to the top of the mountains. The height of the block back of Zachary's, above where the house stands, is about 400 feet less than that of the Pilot, above the fields at its base—but the situation is so different. From its top the distant view is like that from other high peaks, the near view is wild and stern in the extreme, especially across the valley of the mines, where, at a distance of three or four miles is a long front of bare and solid rock, very nearly per-

pendicular, and 5 or 6 hundred feet in height. And what are the names borne by these noble masses? Must they be told? It is enough to put one into a fury even to write them. That on which I stood is the Chimney Top, and the other, opposite, is the Hogback, big or little, I forget which. Never mind; those same tasteful and romantic Greeks were not so much better off than ourselves, after all.—Cape Cystosura, that sounds so amply to us, was Cape Dog's Tail to their ears. It is difficult to change a name. The steep sides and dome shaped summit of the so-called Chimney Top, reminded me of the Pantheon or Rotunda at Rome. Will the latter name be adopted, and will it hold? I fear not—but that this will be the Chimney Top to the end of time.

This region is too remote to be often visited by the inhabitants of the North, it belongs rather to those of South Carolina, and these last have been there. The first time I ascended the Chimney Top, having an instrument in hand, which was necessary to carry with some care, my guides turned from the most direct route, and took me by one that was longer but easier. Ascending by myself a day or two after, I came near the summit to a bare, broad, shelving rock, answering to the account given by the huntsman of a spot which he had just cleared in the fox-chase, and which a Lord, who was behind, hesitated to take after him—"Come along, my Lord, the more you look the less you'll like it." As I turned away to search out a better route, it occurred to me that I should be told that I had been along there, and so I crawled up. And sure enough I learned on my return that Mrs. Calhoun, brave little lady that she is, had been there before me.

For the illustration of our revolutionary history, there is wanted a view to be engraved and handed down as an authentic memorial to future times of some scenes in the woods of Macon county, such as they now are. And many places in this same Cashier's Valley would answer very well.

The turning point in the revolutionary war; the event on which so far as we can judge the issue of the contest depended, was the battle of the Cowpens. It is to my mind one of the most sublime and affecting spectacles, if not absolutely the most sublime and affecting that the revolution afforded; Morgan with his men drawn up in an open wood, and waiting for Tarleton to bring his forces into order and lead them on. Will it ever appear upon the canvases and occupy a niche now vacant in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington? Though not much given, at least since the beard made its appearance under my nose, to the melting mood, I have read Judge Johnston's account of the battle of the Cowpens many times with tears. The man who fifty years hence, shall go with his measuring line to that battle field, and ascertain the exact position of each body of the troops engaged, will have but an imperfect idea of the condition of things, because he can form no accurate conception of the open wood which then covered the country and gave scope for the movements of both armies in case of either victory or defeat. Just such woods there are now in the county of Macon, and they will remain for a few years. The person who has been amongst them will read with the more interest and intelligence on that account, the whole history of the movements of the hostile armies on the soil of North Carolina in the years 1780-81.

But little has yet been done in the remote west to heighten and improve the beauties of nature, and though good taste and judgment have been displayed in the selection of the sites for Court-houses and the villages connected with them, this is the utmost extent to which our commendations can be carried. Waynesville is beautifully situated in the centre of an amphitheatre of mountains, but the houses instead of being arranged with reference to beauty or even convenience, are huddled together as though every inch of ground were as valuable as in Pearl street in the city of New York. Burnsville has good capabilities of improvement, but it will be long before trade, manufactures, or any thing else will create an amount of wealth there which will enable the inhabitants of the place to give beauty and elegance to their village. If the people of Yancey when they come to Court, instead of listening to everlasting political harangues, would turn in and clear away the loose works from the public square, work the streets, and plant out the sugar tree when they attend in the spring of the year, they would finally have a county seat which they would visit with pride and pleasure. I myself regard this place with feelings of deeper interest because in the field just west of it is the last resting place of a beloved pupil, a graduate of the University—John B. Smith, a native of Granville county, N. C. His character, like his name, was plain and unpretending, but most amiable, honest, and worthy as well as intelligent. Engaged in the study of the law, at Mocksville, and coming into the mountains to breathe the pure air during the summer months, he sickened and died at Burnsville. His friends have proposed to remove his remains to his native county. It is the course which affection would dictate, but let him rather sleep here amongst the moun-

WHOLE NO. 239.

With and in his righteous providence
fill and hopes of glory till that last
I remain
E. J. King, Jr.

To Hon. THOS. L. CLINGMAN.

Characteristic Amenity.

We learn that an Association is formed in the city of New York, the object of which is "to use the most vigilant measures to naturalize foreigners as fast as they reach our shores, in order to build up a foreign interest to counteract the projects of the American Republican Party."

We have always gone as far as the farthest in a desire to extend to foreigners every hospitality and kindness which our free and happy country can afford, and towards them on all occasions; our heart has been as warm as the warmest. Towards those who appreciate our institutions, and come among us to enjoy our privileges and to rule our people, we still cherish the same sentiments. But to those who stand up in the ranks above indicated, and treat our native citizens with defiance and contumely, we profess nothing but the most uncompromising hostility. It is time the forbearance of the American people towards the insolence and presumption of foreign emigrants, should be brought to a pause. We profess to reverence our government, and to esteem and venerate the patriots of our land, who have and still are maintaining the honor and dignity of the American character—and the question now is, shall we give way to those who would subvert the former, and misplace the latter? Are we so tired of our government, that we are willing to be ruled by foreign ruffians, fresh from the despotisms of Europe? Are the Irish, French, Dutch, English, more fit to control the destinies of this free country, than the descendants of those who established its liberty and constituted its glory, in toil and blood?

Of all the sources of evil to this country, however, none is so rife with danger and disaster as the prevalence of Political Catholicism, the movers of which are chiefly Irish—and such Irish—laugh! Unless our nerves and our spirit are but an empty boast, we shall never consent to silent or inert in the face of this array against our civil and religious liberties. That it is the object of European Potentates to subvert our Government, cannot be longer doubted, and we think they have chosen fit instruments for that purpose, aided by us in opening the door of citizenship and bestowing office on the rascals of Europe. To the influence and the power in question we yield no further largess, so far as our vote will go on any political occasion; and we intend, through the press, to warn our people of the danger and exhibit the deformities of the conspiracy against our liberties, which has assumed an alarming "head and front" under the auspices of the treacherous host, mis-called the "Democratic Party."—Independent.

Mr. Clay and the Next Presidency.

Most heartily do we concur in the following well-timed remarks of the N. Y. Express:

We are sorry to see the hints or suggestions thrown out, that Mr. Clay may be run for the Presidency in 1848. They are no wise friends of his who throw out these suggestions, for they keep alive party feuds and personal hostility, and "justice" never can be done Mr. Clay, till that personal hostility is removed. Thousands believe, for they have so often read it in Locofoco prints, that Mr. Clay has "murdered" somebody—and that he is a "blackleg," gambling Sabbath nights; they have no manner of doubt. Time and absence from party strife alone, can remove these lies from their effect on ignorant minds. For fifteen years now, they have been so constantly dinned into the ears of ignorance, that justice can only come when he is off the arena of ambition, so that ambitious men in the Locofoco ranks, who have some magnanimity, can afford to correct the lies their co-laborers have spread. The frankness, generosity and fearlessness of Mr. Clay's life and character have exposed him to being lied down; and his is a signal and the melancholy example of the danger of "carrying your heart in your hand," as a public man. History will do him justice. His country and his whole country will do him justice, perhaps in his own day, if this country has need emphatically of him, and he is not always kept in the stage—for never did such man pass without leaving a name and a fame behind him, which the world at least was grateful.

The New School Law.—The attention of the public, and particularly that of the County Courts, is directed to the fact, that under the Common School Law, as revised at the last Session, Superintendents are to be appointed in every County at the Court immediately preceding the first Monday in October, and the Committees elected the last Saturday in September. And the Superintendents and Committees must already appointed will serve until that time. Consequently an appointment of the kind will be made the first Court after the 1st January, as was done under the former Act.—Greenboro, N. C.