

It is even wiser to abstain from laws, which, however wise and good in themselves, have the semblance of inequality, which find no response in the heart of the citizen, and which will be evaded with little remorse. The wisdom of legislation is especially seen in grafting laws on conscience.

Dr. Channing.

SALISBURY, ROWAN COUNTY, N. C. MONDAY, MAY 16, 1831.

[VOL. III., NO. 671.]

Printed and published weekly, by JAMES & FRASER, at the Law Office, in Salisbury, N. C.

FRASER. The terms of the Western Carolinian will be liberal as follows:—
Two dollars for a half year; and five dollars for a year, in advance. If by mail, the postage will be added. Advertisements will be inserted at 25 cents per square for the first week, and 15 cents for each week thereafter. For longer advertisements, the price will be agreed upon. All letters addressed to the Editors, or they may not be found in.

MISCELLANEOUS.

FROM THE MAGAZINE OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.
THE BOHON UPAS TREE.

The Bohon Upas, or poison tree of Java, from the ingenious intermixture of truth and fable with which its early history was connected, presents, one of the most remarkable fictions of modern times. The properties attributed to it were such as were calculated to excite the greatest astonishment as exceeding any thing injurious to animal life within the whole range of the vegetable creation. It was represented as a tree standing alone and unaccompanied by any other vegetable but in itself a living source of the most virulent poison, dealing instant death not only to any one who would have the temerity to touch it, but exhaling such a pestilential atmosphere as to be immediately fatal to any living thing which came within its influence. The poison which was obtained from its trunk and used by the natives, was procured by means of criminals condemned to death, but whose punishment was commuted to the chance of their escaping with life from the hopeless attempt to approach the tree, and escape, which could only be effected in the remote event of a favorable wind occurring to carry off the noxious vapour by means of which they could reach the tree in safety; a chance so rare as to render the commutation of little avail.

The true history of the Bohon Upas has of late years been investigated; and as usually happens with most of those relations which so highly interest the imagination all the marvelous characteristics attributed to it are found to be perfectly reconcilable with the ordinary laws of nature. It is to be regretted that the pages of natural history, which ought to be the record of rigid truth and fact, should be so often disfigured by relations either fabricated by unprincipled and mendacious narrators, or credulously received from ignorant and superstitious natives who are always willing to minister to the appetite of this class of men for the unnatural and prodigious.

It is not less to be regretted that such is the proclivity in mankind to indulge in these monstrous creations of fancy that their influence often remains long after their utter falsity has been detected. The Bohon Upas has furnished the theme of much poetical illustration and will perhaps continue to exist among the machinery of the poet with the Hydras and Chimeras, the Mermaids and Gorgons and other monsters of a prurient fancy ignorant of the real and more truly remarkable wonders of nature. The poison called Upas and Ipo is used by the natives of the Molucca and neighbouring islands and has always been an object of curiosity from the wonderful effects said to be produced by it, and the exaggerated descriptions which travellers have received from the Indians of those places concerning it. The tree, as it is described by Leschenault, is large, rising to the height of 100 feet, and with a trunk of 18 feet in circumference at its base. It belongs, in the Linnean arrangement, to the monocious class, or those having the stamina and pistils separate in different flowers on the same plant. It is usually found growing in fertile places, surrounded by other plants on which its neighbourhood has no sort of injurious effect. Its trunk is straight, and covered with a smooth whitish bark, and the wood whitish. The leaves generally fall before the flowering commences, and unfold again after the male flowers have blown; they are of an oval figure, of a tough leathery consistence, a pale green colour, rough to the touch, and covered with short hairs.

The flowers are of two kinds; the male which are numerous, and seated on a receptacle, are borne on a long footstalk or peduncle; the shape of the receptacle is much like that of a mushroom: the female flowers are solitary and have not the long peduncle of the male; the calix is thick and crowded

with scales, the germs single, styles two, separating widely from each other. The juice of the trunk is very viscid, of a bitter taste and whitish colour, and exudes copiously from the tree, when an incision is made. The exhalations from the juice are like those which proceed from many kinds of euphorbia, sumacks, and the machinal tree of South America, and are dangerous, particularly to certain constitutions which seem more liable to absorb the emanations, than others, which are not affected by them. A Javanese was employed by Leschenault to procure flowering specimens from a tree, to effect which, he was obliged to climb the trunk; he had not ascended above 20 feet before he found himself affected with nausea and vertigo, and was obliged to stop and return; he continued sick for several days afterwards. Another Javanese employed for the same purpose, mounted to the top of the same tree, and brought away the desired specimens, without experiencing the least inconvenience. Leschenault himself had one of the trees cut down, and went frequently among the branches, and even rubbed the gum resin which oozed from the cut limbs on his face and hands, but felt no effect from it whatever. The various animals which inhabited the other trees in the vicinity, appeared to make no distinction with respect to the Upas, but lizards and insects were as commonly observed on its trunk as on any other; and birds were as often observed perching on its branches.

The effect which the tree is thus found to produce upon certain temperaments, is not greatly different from that which characterizes the poison sumack *rhus vernix* of our own country. This plant usually grows as a bush or small tree, commonly in low swampy grounds, and on some constitutions it produces a very troublesome effect, not only when handled, but on coming within the exhalations which proceeds from it. Painful eruptions and swellings are the consequence, while to others it is perfectly harmless.

The chief use which is made of the juice of the Upas, is in the preparation of a poison with which the Indians of Borneo, Java, and other neighbouring places tinge the points of their arrows which they employ in the chase, or as weapons of war. The manner of preparing this poison is a secret confined only to a few individuals among the natives, whose influence and authority over the rest of the tribe are not a little enhanced by their knowledge of this dangerous secret. It appears to be used as an ingredient in a mixture of several plants of acrid properties, which are boiled together until the decoction is evaporated to a proper thickness. Its effects then are extremely powerful. Leschenault made several experiments with the arrows which had been medicated with it. Fowls wounded with them died in one, two or three minutes, according to the greater quantity of the liquid which had been spread on the arrow points; and dogs wounded in the same manner, died in about eight minutes. They all expired in violent convulsions. When used in the chase, it did not appear that the flesh of the game killed with them, was at all affected by the poison.

The use of poisoned arrows is a custom common among uncivilized men of all nations, ancient and modern. We learn from history, that it was known among the ancient Scythians and Gauls. The African savages according to the accounts of Bruce, employ several of these wild plants, for the purpose of increasing the destructive effects of their rude weapons. Among those which he observed, he notices some kinds of euphorbia, and of the wild sumacks of those regions. Thunberg mentions that the Hottentots are in the habit of using for the same purpose, the venom of serpents and the juice of a vegetable, the *Sideroxylum toxiferum*. The various tribes of South American savages have acquired the knowledge of the poisonous properties of many species of plants, which they convert to similar uses; as among the Javanese, and

the mode of preparing them is entrusted to certain old men or magicians among them. These poisoned arrows were also known among some of the aboriginal tribes of our own continent, and one of the plants made use of was the *gonolobus macrocarpus*, of Michaux.

RICHELIEU.

The character of this celebrated minister of Louis XIII. of France, is thus drawn by E. E. Crowe, Esq. in the Cabinet Cyclopaedia.

"Richelieu was the true monarch of the reign: it was he who stamped upon it the impress of his genius and despotic character. True, he did but adopt and follow up the plans of the great Henry, in humbling the Huguenots, the noblesse, and the house of Austria; but the execution of three such enterprises in the short space of twenty years, and by a minister risen from obscurity, and obliged to act as often in despite of the monarch as with his countenance and aid, places Richelieu in the first rank of statesmen. His address, his firmness, his sagacity, were unequalled. He was naturally magnanimous, loving wealth and splendor more as the symbol of power than as the gratification of self fish vanity. The cruelty of his character is its great blemish; yet he was clement to the Huguenots, and shrunk early from the severe acts which he foresaw his pains for raising royalty would throw upon him. In the states-General of 1614, he proposed to do away with the punishment of death for political crimes, yet he soon came to be unsparing in its infliction; and the decapitation of each new victim increased in him that taste for blood, until his prelate's robe assumed the crimson dye of the murderer and the tyrant. On a superficial view, this minister's unvarying success is the most striking feature of his career; and yet all of this that his own sagacity might not produce, the extreme imprudence and feebleness of his enemies may account for. The crime of having trodden out the last spark of his country's liberties, and of having converted its monarchic government into pure despotism, is that for which Richelieu is most generally condemned. But the state of anarchy which he removed was license, not liberty. The task of reconciling private independence with public peace, civil rights with the existence of justice,—and this without precedent or tradition, with out that rooted stock on which freedom, in order to grow and bear fruit, must be grafted,—was a conception which, however familiar to our age, was utterly unknown and impracticable to that of Richelieu. With the horrors of civil war fresh in the memory of all, the general desire was for tranquility and peace, not liberty; to which, moreover, had it been contemplated, the first necessary step was that of humbling the aristocracy. It was impossible that constitutional freedom could ever grow out of the chaos of privileges, and anarchy, and organized rebellion, that the government had to contend with. In building up her social fabric, France had in fact gone wrong, destroyed the old foundations, and rebuilt on others without solidity or system. To introduce order or add solidity to so ill-constructed a fabric was impossible; Richelieu found it necessary to raze all at once to the ground, except the central donjon of despotism, which he left standing. Had Richelieu, with all his genius and sagacity, undertaken for liberty what he achieved for royalty his age would have rejected or misunderstood him, as it did Bacon and Galileo. He might, indeed, as a man of letters, have consigned such a political dream to the volume of an Utopia, but from action or administration he would have been as a dreamer. Liberty must come of claim of the mass; of the general enlightenment, firmness, and probity. It is no great physical secret, which a single brain, finding, may announce and so establish: it is a moral truth, which, like a gem, hides its ray and its preciousness in obscurity, nor becomes refugent, till all around it is beaming with light. Had we space to enter into the

minor details of Richelieu's administration, much might be found to abstract from his merit, much to add to it. Management of the finances was grasping and unwise. France paid dearly for her glory and ascendancy. The 20,000,000 of revenue, that enabled Henry IV. to amass, were quadrupled and yet expended by Richelieu the greater part being wasted ere it reached the treasury. Thus the proud monarchy which Richelieu founded owed to him also the canker that was destined to destroy it,—the extravagance and mismanagement of its pecuniary resources. For the sake of a certain revenue, there were 40,000 employments in finance and law left in the hereditary possession of subjects; an anomaly in a despotism scarcely credible. But the minister could not venture to attack at once the noblesse of the sword and that of the robe. He destroyed the former, and contented himself with humbling the latter."

THE WEAVIL.

It is well understood by all Naturalists that the winged species undergo three different states—1st the egg is hatched into a worm—next the worm exudes a sort of fluid from its surface, which hardens into a shell, encasing the animal, and constituting the chrysalis state—and lastly it passes from this state, during which it is maturing its wings, feet, &c. into the condition of an insect.

It takes wings and flies away to its business or its pleasures. Those, who have been in the habit of keeping silk worms for their amusement or profit, will have noticed these various metamorphoses, which are almost as surprising as those which are related in the beautiful strains of Ovid—There—Daphne is changed into a Laurel—and here we have an ugly and insect worm suddenly, changed into a beautiful butterfly, glittering with all the hues of the rainbow, and frolicking with more than the vivacity of a child. In the silk-worm alone the fly is seldom on the wing.—It lives but a few hours—revels in sensuality, and forgets to fly.

All the fly state is subject to this three-fold transformation.—It is true of the moth, of the butterfly, of the beetle, some of whom

"—wheel their drowsing flight,"
in the day time, and others infest our lighted rooms at night. It is true of the weevil, which is seen to fly from the heaps of corn in the spring time, with bodies more tiny and hues as dull, as those of the smallest moths, which fly round the candle, until they perish in the flame. This is the time for the weevil to burst its little "cerement," and emerge into the open air.—

Take an ear of corn, (& I have examined every variety, from the rare ripe to the ground seed, white red or streaked,) and you will find some grains that are pierced with holes—some that look dark, with a hole in them—and others, that have apparently no hole in them, because the film that covers the receptacle has not fallen off. From the first, the little winged insect has already escaped—in the two last cases, it is still in the grain in the chrysalis state, either about to emerge from it, or not matured for its flight.—Most of the grains of corn are not pierced at all. They have escaped the ravages of the insect.

The secret of all this is now understood. While the green corn is yet standing upon the stalk in the autumn, the winged insect visits it—pierces it—and inserts its egg. The egg remains in the softest part of the grain, during the winter.—

The heat of the spring hatches it into the worm, which feeds upon the substance of the grain until it grows to about the sixth of an inch; then becomes a chrysalis; and afterwards passes from the grain to fulfil the purposes of its production. Let any one take an ear of corn; expose it to the temperature of a room well warmed, with the present genial air—and he will witness what I have described.

Richmond Compiler.

HOME MATTERS.

The beauties of spring are beginning to unfold themselves around us. The young buds are starting upon every tree, and the willows, which fringe our streams, are bowing to the breeze, their new and beautiful greenness. The hills have lost their grey and desolate coloring, and a sprightly and vivid change already evinces, that

"The verdure of the meadow
Is creeping to the hills."
We know of no place to which spring brings more attractions than to

our own city. The beautiful River—the mountains rising their blue heads all around the horizon—like so many clouds of a summer evening piled fold upon fold against the sky,—the green, luxuriant lawns—the neat farm houses—the well cultivated and noble farms—the boats swaying their verdant heads to the wind—all conspire to render an excursion without the city one of exceeding pleasure. Then the city itself is not to be overlooked. 'Tis true we have nothing magnificent to boast of—but we have elegance, taste and comfort in our private dwellings and our public edifices. And we have a population worthy of the best days of New England—sober, moral and intelligent—men who would not hesitate

"To shake hands with a king upon his throne,
And deem it favor to his majesty."
—And our Salisbury Ladies—God bless them—they are worthy of better eulogium than a bachelor like ourselves can bestow. Talk of the girls of Broadway, forsooth! Why—no of our Hartford Ladies, in a single morning's walk will gather more bows into her possession, than have been lost by the whiskered dandies of Gotham for the past six months!

Meantime, the business part of our city is wearing a lively aspect. Even while we write, we can look out from our office window, upon the swollen tide of the Connecticut, and watch the progress of one of our Company Steam Boats, wending its way through the morning mist, like a creature of life. Success to the boat and its owners. Hartford and her pleasant cousin of Springfield may now shake hands with each other, on terms of perfect familiarity.

Lord Byron's Double.—In the latter end of the year 1811, I met, one evening, at the Alfred, my old school and form fellow, Peel, the Irish Secretary. He told me, that in 1810 he met me, as he thought, in St. James' street, but we passed without speaking. He mentioned this, and it was denied as impossible, I being then in Turkey. A day or two afterwards, he pointed out to his brother a person on the opposite side of the way. "There," said he, "is the man I took for Byron." His brother instantly answered, "Why, it is Byron, and no one else." But this is not all: I was seen by somebody to write down my name amongst the inquiries after the King's health. Now, at this very period, as nearly as I could make out, I was ill of a strong fever at Patras, from the malaria. If I had died then, this would have been a new ghost story for you.—Moor's Life of Byron.

One Swallow does not make a Summer.—One sharp, frosty day the late king of England, when Prince of Wales, went into the Thatched House Tavern, and ordered a beef-stake; but, observing that it was excessively cold, desired the waiter to bring him first a glass of brandy and water. He emptied that in a twinkling, then a second, then a third.—"Now," said the prince, "I am warm and comfortable; bring my stake." On this Mr. Sheridan, who was present, wrote the following impromptu:
"The prince came in and said 'twas cold,
Then put to his head the summer;
Till a swallow after swallow came,
When he pronounced it summer."

Evidence of the senses.—A roguish boy stole the glasses from his grandfather's spectacles, and when the old gentleman put them on, finding he could not see, he exclaimed, "marcy me, I've lost my sight!" but thinking the impediment to vision might be the dirtiness of the glasses, took them off to wipe them; when not feeling them, he, still more frightened, cried out, "What's come now, why I have lost my feeling too!"

I happened to dine with Pitt when he took occasion to ask me, "Of all the places where you have been, where did you fare best?" My answer was, "in Poland; for the nobility live there with uncommon taste and splendor; their cooks are French, their confections Italian, and their wine Tokay." He immediately observed, "I have heard before of the Polish diet."
Sir J. Sinclair's Correspondence.