

From the Catskill Recorder.

Through the politeness of a gentleman of this village, we have been favored with a letter, written by him to a friend in Massachusetts, while on a tour from New York to the Mississippi Territory—via Charleston, Havana and New-Orleans. For the gratification of our readers we have made the following extracts

Dated New-Orleans,
APRIL 3 1817.
on the Mississippi.

Left New-York on the last of December, and had a pleasant passage of 6 days to Charleston: after remaining there a week, sailed for Havana, where I arrived in 7 days, having favorable winds and good weather. From thence proceeded in a small schooner for New-Orleans and a tedious and uncomfortable passage of 28 days, & attended in two instances with no small danger of being lost.—By skilful masters, this passage is usually made in 12 days. Remained at New-Orleans only one day; and on the 16th of February proceeded by an inland passage through bayous, lakes, passes and bays, 180 miles to Mobile. My business led me a circuitous course by land 260 miles, as far as Fort Montgomery, on the Alabama River, 90 miles from Mobile and thence to St. Stephens, on the Tombigby, near 96 miles from Mobile, from whence I am now returning to New-Orleans by the sea passage, as it is termed, that is, by the way of Mobile Port, at the mouth of the Bay, and thence by the Mississippi River.

Charleston is situated at the confluence of two rivers, with a bay, islands, &c. below it much like New-York. Facing to the east, the harbor is more difficult of entrance than New-York. It is a place of much business, from the quantity of rich productions of the country which are shipped there. It is also a place of much dissipation, and of some religion.—The population is a mixed multitude of all nations and colors! but sable are dominates:—The daily auctions of from 20 to 30 human beings of every age, from the grey head of 75 to the infant of a week, like so many bales of merchandize, was to me a distressing and humiliating spectacle. The wealth of the planters is very great. I heard that the income of a grower of rice, (Mr. H—) was, the year past, \$210,000. He is said to own 2500 slaves. The very high price of cotton, rice and tobacco, is increasing the wealth of this southern section of our country astonishingly.

Cuba is a fine, or, in the language of this country, an *Elegant* island. The land is high, and in many places mountainous—the water good—the soil most fertile in sugar, coffee, cotton and the richest fruits. You recollect its size, viz. 700 miles long, and 60 wide. I was in company with an intelligent gentleman by the name of B—, who resides in the interior of Cuba.—He is of French extraction—was born at New-Orleans—educated at New-Jersey college—and for 18 years has resided on Cuba as a coffee planter. From April to October, (he says,) they uniformly have the sea breeze or trade winds as it is termed, every day, commencing between 8 and 9 o'clock, the sky clear; and between 2 and 5 o'clock P. M. they have a shower, after which it clears off. The sea-breeze & shower keep the air cool. He thinks their warmest weather by no means so oppressive as our northern summers. During the other six months, which is called the dry season, they have no land storms, no frost, and very little rain, but mild and pleasant weather, like our June and September. He thinks the climate most healthy, there being more old people there than in any other country; and the countenances of the inhabitants show as much health, as any country he has seen; and he has travelled much in Europe and America. Not more than one tenth of this country is cultivated; the remainder is forest; and new lands perfectly adapted to the

culture of sugar, coffee and cotton, may be purchased at \$2 per acre. The Spanish government have relaxed their colonial system towards Cuba; the state of their colonies on the main has led to this. They countenance foreigners settling here as planters; and I find there are many American planters on the Island. The harbor of Havana is most excellent, its entrance does not exceed 90 rods, which is formidably fortified by the Moro Castle. The harbor is spacious and deep, sufficient for the largest ships of the line, and so safe of access that a pilot is not wanted. The city has a population of upwards of 80,000—is regularly laid out in squares, built of a coarse grey freestone.—The streets are very narrow, barely sufficient for two carts or carriages to pass; the buildings are covered with tile; the floors of marble or cement; and there are scarcely any glass windows. Churches, convents, monasteries, monks and friars abound. I was shown the tree, still living, under which Columbus said mass, on his landing, where a handsome monument is erected. Had Cuba an United States' government, and our northern society, it would be a most desirable residence.

The voyage, or rather the distance from Havana to the Balize, or entrance of the Mississippi, is 500 miles. The entrance of this river is somewhat difficult as it projects far into the Gulf of Mexico, with deep bays on each side of it, the land almost level with the sea, and no light house or land-marks. The mariner has only his compass and quadrant to direct him, and strong irregular currents, from the immense quantities of water this mighty river delivers to old ocean, to contend with. The water is of a muddy colour, like our northern Streams, after heavy rains: and when we were 15 miles out, long before we could discover the land; it gave the surrounding sea its colour.—I was surprised at the narrowness of this river; it does not average more than three-fourths of a mile in width, but is very deep—I am told by mariners, 180 feet on average. Its shores are covered with trees and logs, with their roots appertaining to them. By these lodging on the banks, and being covered by the soil brought down by the water, the river is narrowed. For 30 miles from its mouth are no trees—small canes and coarse grass are the only productions. The first plantation is 45 miles; after which there are more or less continually in sight. From New-Orleans to the Balize, the land on each side of the river, I am told, does not exceed 6 or 8 miles in width before it meets the sea, and is low and swampy. The river is dyked out by a bank several feet high. The current of the river is 4 miles per hour in high water, and about 4 in low.

New-Orleans is regularly laid into squares, and is a place of much dissipation, and of business. Strong jealousies exist between the old French inhabitants and the Americans. Upwards of 250 square rigged vessels were in port when I was there. From the extent and fertility of the Upper Country, and the surprising rapidity with which it is filling up, New-Orleans, will rival New-York in population and business sooner than is generally contemplated, unless it should be undermined & washed away by this gigantic river, to which many judicious people think it imminently exposed.

Mobile is an old town, settled more than a century since, by the French. It has a population of from 800 to 1000 inhabitants; & has a respectable fort built by the French soon after its settlement. The houses are mean and decaying one story wooden buildings. It is situated at the northeast corner of the Bay, 30 miles from the point or mouth. The bay averages 14 miles in width. The harbor of Mobile is shoal; vessels drawing 9 feet approach the town with difficulty, and all larger can approach only within 12 miles of the town. Yet with these serious disadvantages, it will, from the extent and fertility of the country watered by the Tombigby and Alabama rivers, soon become a

place of extensive business, unless a better harbour should be discovered on the east side of the bay of which there is some probability. The country about Mobile, and above it, has been under fatal obstructions to its improvement.—Within the last 50 years, it has changed masters four times. The Indians have possessed all the Upper Country and the seat of the late war with the Creeks was just above Mobile. All the inhabitants were obliged to flee into forts or stockades. One of these (Fort Mimms,) 50 miles from Mobile, on the Alabama, was taken by a party of 750 Creek Indians. In August, 1813, and 308 men, women and children were massacred with truly Indian barbarity—only 6 or 8 escaped.—My business led me to the spot. The Alabama and Tombigby rivers united 40 miles above Mobile. The depth of water would admit sea vessels up to this point? but the bar below Mobile and the strength of the current, and winding course of the river are fatal obstructions. But these streams, for 400 miles, are navigable for barges or flats, and afford important advantages for inland navigation.

Emigrations to this country within 12 months past, have been immense; so great that a famine of bread is actually produced; corn, 80 miles above Mobile, being from 4 to 6 dollars per bushel. These emigrations are principally from the Carolinas, Georgia and Tennessee. Many planters worth from 10,000 to \$30,000 have come on, selected their plantation and began their cultivation on the public lands, intending to purchase at the sale, which is expected to be next fall. At any rate, they get two crops, the profits of which; at the present prices, will enable them to outbid any competitors.

Being desirous of obtaining correct information respecting the country. I requested a Col Dinsmore for many years a resident, one of the principal surveyors, with whom I became acquainted at St. Stephens's, to give me a letter describing the country—which he did—and a copy of it for your amusement and information. His account I find abundantly corroborated from Gen. Gaines, and a number of other respectable sources.

St. Stephens, (M. T.)
March 8, 1817.

"SIR—Agreeably to your desire I will give you a short sketch of this country, of its quality of soil its possible products and capability of settlements. The topography will be defined by which on reference to your maps you easily discover the position.

"The country south of latitude 31° 33', N. is generally a low piny land, intersected by water-courses, on the immediate banks of which rich land is to be found, a large portion of which is too moist for any culture but rice. North of that parallel, the country gradually rises; the growth on the high ground becomes mixed with oak hickory, dogwood and poplar, indicative of a better soil; the intervals or bottoms become generally higher and dryer, and the country susceptible of more compact population. Cotton is at present the staple product of the territory from latitude 35 south and while the present price and demand continue it will supercede the culture of every thing else, except the indispensable necessities of life.—A man and horse can cultivate in cotton about ten acres of logwood, which will produce from 12 to 15 cwt. of seed cotton an acre, at present worth \$5 per cwt or he can cultivate 15 acres of high land, which will produce from 8 to 10 cwt. It is to be understood, however, that one person cannot pick out more than half the quantity which he can cultivate; but a cotton crop has the advantage of all others, in that it never hurries the planter in gathering and every child over 7 years of age can be profitably employed in picking.

The present growth of the country consists of a great variety of the oak of the largest and best quality, of hickory, poplar, locust, mulberry, pine and cypress.—The possible growth may be ev-

ery species of fruit trees known in the United States—apples, cherries, plums in all their variety, apricots, peaches, and figs; the latter will require some shelter of screen from the severity of the winter in the northern part of the territory—indian corn or maize, rye, wheat barley, oats, rice, potatoes (sweet and irish); artichokes, pindars, beans, pumpkins, melons, squashes and similias, and every kind of hortulan production. In case of a depression of the price or demand for cotton, indigo, madder, woad & tobacco can be cultivated to any extent. The best part of the country which I have seen in the territory, is near the Alabama—I mean, that which will admit of the greatest farming population, and of course would best suit a colony from the north, who ought to bring with them smiths, wheelwrights, weavers, tanners, curriers, boot and shoemakers, hatters, schoolmasters and preachers.

Commerce in the Mississippi Territory, at present, takes the lead of agriculture. Goods are very abundant, but are sold high. I am sorry to say that religion in all this country is out of the question. I cannot learn that there are more than seven religious societies in the whole Territory, & these are very small Catholic and Presbyterian societies. The sabbath is scarcely known, except as a holiday. Profane language is common. Education is sadly neglected. I have seen children of rich planters of 8 or 10 years, who I found on conversing with them could not say their letters. The population was at present a large proportion of that class of emigrants which Gen. C—calls pioneers. The inhabitants are hospitable, but indolent. Their living, we northern peoples should call miserable. The winter climate is delightful—very little frost and seldom any storms—and with common temperance & prudence I suspect more healthy than our northern climates, where we have such extremes, and sudden changes.

From the Boston Centinel.

Explanation.

If the following extract from Gen. WILKINSON'S late 'Memoirs' is correct, we were in error in our remark, that President Monroe escaped uninjured during the revolutionary war, and hasten to correct the error. It will be recollected, that we uttered nothing disrespectful of the President. We merely stated, that he had done his whole duty as a soldier of the revolution; and that like WASHINGTON, BROOKS, and others—had escaped uninjured. We did not make the remark solely on our recollection of the general events of the war, but made inquiries of several of those who took an active part in the field from beginning to the close of the revolution; and were assured by them, that they never heard of the fact. WILKINSON himself says:—"The particular acts of gallantry never have been noticed." This makes the whole more extraordinary, as Gen. WASHINGTON commanded in the battle of Trenton, and it is well known he was always particular in giving credit wherever it was due, and seldom omitted in making a full return of the names of officers killed or wounded. The following is the extract:—

Battle of Trenton.

Extract from the 1st. vol. chap. 3. page 129, of Wilkinson's Memoirs.

"It was now broad day, and the storm beat violently in our faces; the attack had commenced on the left, and was immediately answered by Col. Stark in our front, who forced the enemy's picket, and pressed into the town; our column being close at his heels. The enemy made a momentary shew of resistance by a wild and undirected fire from the windows of their quarters, which they abandoned as we advanced, and made an attempt to form in the main street which might have succeeded but for a six gun battery opened by Capt. T. Forrest, under the immediate order of Gen. WASHINGTON, at the head of King's street, which annoyed the

enemy in various directions; and the decisions of Capt. William Washington, who seconded by Lieut. JAMES MONROE, (now president of the U. S.) led the advanced guard of the left column, perceiving that the enemy were endeavouring to form a battery, rushed forward drove the artillery from their guns, and took two pieces in the act of firing.

"These officers were both wounded in the charge; the captain in the wrist—the lieutenant through the shoulder. These particular acts of gallantry have never been noticed, and yet they could not have been too highly appreciated, for if the enemy had got his artillery into operation, in a narrow street, it might have checked our movement, and given him time to form and select; and if he had retired across the bridge in his rear, and taken post, he would have placed a defile between us, which in our half naked, half frozen condition, he ought to have defended again our utmost efforts; and we in turn might have been compelled to retreat. It would have been fatal to us."

SOUTH AMERICA.

It seems by the latest intelligence that overtures have really been made by the Spanish court to the English, to engage their assistance in the subjugation of the revolted colonies in South America. It may be remembered, that Lord Castlereagh did some time since explicitly state in the house of commons, that England was to take no part in this controversy. It is a questionable fact whether Great Britain does not look with a favorable eye on this struggle of the colonies for their emancipation. Secluded as she is in a great measure, from the continent of Europe, she is now in quest of other markets for her manufactures, & it is of the utmost consequence to her that the South American ports should be opened. Lord Castlereagh further in the house of commons declared, that England was not bound by treaty with his catholic majesty, to interfere in the question between that sovereign and his colonies. We suspect that the whole truth was not told by his lordship—for we deem it extremely probable that there is a private understanding between all the allied powers, to remain neuter in the controversy. The opinion, we confess, is only an inference from facts with which every one is acquainted. If the allied powers did really contemplate hostility, they would not have remained inactive so long. With such an excess of military populations Europe is now burdened with, the allied monarchs would embrace the first opportunity to rid her of such an incumbrance. No better opportunity could be wished for, than South America affords, to relieve Europe from the military burden by which she is overloaded. The allies are perfectly aware of the danger of disbanding suddenly so large a body of armed men, as they are now compelled to support.—How comes it to pass that an opportunity so favorable as that above spoken of, is neglected? Is it to be supposed that the allied powers are ignorant of the movements in South America? We must believe that kings, emperors and potentates are worse than idiots, if we admit this supposition of their ignorance! On the other hand, can we believe that crowned heads are indifferent to the movements of the South Americans?—This would amount to a charge of idiocy again for these movements are of immense importance to the whole civilized world, and will, if the patriots are successful, form a new era in the history of man. At no period could the confederated powers of Europe strike so decisive a blow as they can at the present moment. To the above mentioned considerations, may be added another, the horror with which all the sovereigns of Europe, regard revolutions. This mutual dread of revolutions, forms the strength of the confederates, and yet this important one is now passing under their eyes, acquiring more strength by every hour de-