

MINERVA; or, ANTI-JACOBIN.

TWO & A HALF DOLS. PER ANK. Payable half Yearly.

PUBLISHED (WEEKLY) BY WILLIAM BOYLAN.

TWO DOLLARS PER ANK. Paid in Advance.

Vol. 8.]

RALEIGH, (N. C.) MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 1803.

[No. 384.]

From *Reff's Philadelphia Gazette.*

EXTRACTS

Of letters from an American Gentleman travelling in Europe, to the Editor of this Gazette.

CONTINUED.

February, 1803.

ON leaving Bern for Geneva, we relinquished the direct road by Freyburg, and pursued that of Neuchatel, on account of the diversity of its scenery.—The road is very pleasant, leading thro' a charming piece of country, enlivened by cheerful villages, neat farms, and comfortable cottages. All the country people have healthy ruddy complexions.—They are plain in their dress, modest and industrious, and rather shy of strangers. Taking them altogether, I tho't them very much like the Welch. We passed along the lake of Morat, and then round the lower end of the lake of Neuchatel by St. Blaise to the town.

Neuchatel is most beautifully situated on base of a steep mountain, immediately on the north west side of the lake, about a league from the lower end. The buildings are substantial, being constructed principally of an olive coloured stone, which the neighbouring quarries produce. The *Maison de Ville* is a superb building, and would do credit to any city both as to taste and architecture. The Neuchatel red wine is excellent, & ranks in my estimation next to Burgundy for delicacy and flavor. The town, and the territory annexed to it, form part of the Helvetic league, but the sovereignty belongs to the King of Prussia. There are several houses here engaged in the cotton business. There are no troops stationed in it; nor has it been in any manner disturbed by the troubles of Switzerland.

We left Neuchatel at day break, and saw the sun rise over the mountains on the opposite side of the lake, which are very lofty and rudely broken into a variety of shapes.—These mountains are a part of the Greek Alps, & join to Mount Blanc and the great St. Bernard, about 100 miles distant. The whole chain being capped with snow, the rising of the sun gave them a splendid appearance. From Neuchatel to Yverdon, distant about 27 miles, the road runs in view of the lake, and affords a charming ride. On our left we had the lake of Neuchatel with the villages on its margin, and the snow mountains on the opposite side, broken into a thousand forms, and rising with great majesty behind each other. The lake is almost 30 miles long, and from 6 to 8 broad, the vineyards stretching uninterruptedly along the foot of the mountains.

We made a halt at Yverdon, situated at the head of lake Neuchatel. It has nothing attached to it particularly worthy of notice, excepting a good view of the lake, some charming walks in the environs, and a collection of antique curiosities at the library, which were found in the neighborhood where a Roman colony was early founded. From Yverdon there are two roads leading through that charming and celebrated tract of country called the Pays de Vaud to Lausanne, the one by Moudon, the other by Orbe Cofsonay. We preferred the latter. Before we reached Orbe, the beauties of the Pays de Vaud began to open to our view, presenting a very rich well cultivated vale, with villages on each side, surrounded by vineyards. The centre of the vale furnishes luxuriant meadows and pasturage for a multitude of cattle. Within a league and a half of Lausanne we had Mount Blanc and the Alps in view, and as we continued to advance, the lake of Geneva gradually opened, until we descended the last hill, when we had a most extensive view of it, as far as the sight could reach.—Lausanne is finely situated on the north or bow side of the lake of Geneva, not far from the widest part of it, and about 5 leagues from the upper end of the lake. The town is built partly on a deep vale, and partly on the side and ridge of a steep hill. It is impossible, by any description, to do justice to the extreme beauty of many of the towns on the lakes. Lausanne is pre-eminent amongst them.

On our way from hence to Geneva, we passed through Morges, which is a handsome little town on the edge of the lake, and one of the places before men-

tioned selected as a depot for the ordnance and military stores of Switzerland, from whence, by the lake waters, there is an easy communication to Geneva. We also passed through Allemann, Roll, Nion Copper, Verfoy, and many other villages, most of which are surrounded by vineyards, the road is excellent, and the country distinguished by the name of the Cote on account of the extent of its improvements, and the beauty of its appearance. We had Mount Blanc in view the greater part of the distance from Lausanne, to Geneva, towering on an immense height above the other mountains. At Coppet, about two leagues from Geneva, we passed the Swiss line and entered into the French department of Lemane. Geneva is now made the capital. The greater part of this department formerly belonged to the Duchy of Savoy. The lake of Geneva (or Lac Lemane) is about 50 miles in length, and varies in breadth from ten miles downwards. It is in shape something like the moon at her first quartering. The greater part of the north side is bounded by the Pays de Vaud, and the Cote. On the south side, are the Alps of Bern, Vallais and Savoy rising majestically rude. Villages abound at short distances all round the lake, than which nothing can be conceived more vernal and pleasurable. Most of the houses in Switzerland have wide projecting roofs, which serve as pent houses. Fountains of the purest water appear in every direction, and the towns and villages are supplied in so plentiful a manner, that it must prove a great luxury in the summer season. Water mills also abound, together with farm houses and cottages, scattered amongst the mountains, some of them so insulated and detached from society, as to leave each family in the situation of a small republic by itself: and indeed nothing can look more like it, for the family, the barn, the stable, cow house, &c. are often comprehended under one roof. But there is a general appearance of neatness and comfort in all their dwellings. A great deal of wine is made through all that part of the country which we have traversed. The white is esteemed the best, except about Neuchatel, where the red wine, though very richly flavored, has not sufficient strength to admit of exportation. The country abounds with wood, and the valleys with the finest pasturage, by which they are enabled to make abundance of excellent butter and cheese. This country may truly be called the *Reservoir of Europe*, for it is a fountain which supplies four of its largest rivers, viz. the Danube emptying into the Black Sea, the Rhone into the Mediterranean, the Loire into the Atlantic, and the Rhine into the North Sea. Travelling in Switzerland is about one third dearer than in France or Germany; but then the carriages and horses are very good, the road fine, and the accommodations extremely comfortable. I left the rural and captivating scenery of Switzerland with infinite regret.

Geneva is situated on the lower end of the lake, and the town is divided by the river Rhone, which issues from the lake with great rapidity. The buildings are good, and the town appears lively—the people animated, and fond of dress and gaiety. The inns or hotels are very indifferent. This city is celebrated for the great number of arrtils which are employed in the making of watches and the manufacture of watch materials, which constitutes a principal part of its trade. It is governed by a major, (who must be native born) and a council under their old code of laws.—The French do not interfere with any thing relative to the government of the city; but they have a garrison of about a thousand men, who keep possession of the fortifications and suburbs.—As in Flanders and Germany, musicians generally make their appearance during dinner. I was much amused the first day after our arrival by the entrance of two little Savoy girls, the one about twelve, the other about fourteen years old, in the rustic dress of their country and with woollen shoes. Their brother, a boy about fifteen, accompanied them as musician and played very well, while the two little girls exhibited a variety of graceful dances peculiar to the country. The soil of Savoy

is so scanty, and the peasantry so indigent, that their children are thus forced from home to seek a subsistence in the neighboring countries. The Savoyards may be found as domestic in all the southern parts of Europe.

After leaving Geneva, we took the road for Lyons. While we stopped at Coulonges, which is situated at the base of Mount Jura, we ascended some distance up the mount, and had a very extensive view of Savoy. Mount Jura is covered with wild box. A short distance from Coulonges we came to fort L'Ecluse, which is built on a very high rock the right side of the Rhone, and commands the narrow pass where nature has made a chasm for its course between Mount Jura and the mountains of Savoy. This first is the most romantically situated, and commands views into Savoy and France at the same point—soon after leaving fort L'Ecluse, after passing through a very deep valley, we arrived at the falls of the Rhone, and just before these, the river disappears for about two hundred yards, and then rises again from under a bed of rocks. We then passed thro' Chantillon, between which and St. German Devoux, there are some stupendous and wild views. Descending to Lake Coling, we passed by a fine cascade, discharged from a perpendicular rock of forty feet high, close by the side of the road. The lake is about a mile long, the margin skirted all round with wild box, and at a small distance rises a ridge of very lofty bare rocks, which nearly encompasses the lake. At Nantua we made a stay, to see a very large manufactory for spinning silk, well worthy the attention of those who are acquainted with the machinery and progress. Leaving the lake of Nantua some distance behind us, we began to ascend a very formidable mountain. The morning was mild, and the sun bright: We had not continued ascending more than an hour and a half, before we lost all our clear atmosphere, and were surrounded by an almost impenetrable and chilling fog. This uncomfortable fog continued till we had descended some distance on the opposite side of the mountain, where we abruptly met the most bold and tremendous declivity which we had yet seen in our travels. We were on a narrow road—on our left was a precipice varying from 600 to 1200 feet deep: on the right of the road the rocks ascended nearly as much, and were so perpendicular, that they seemed to overhang us. We thought it most prudent to make our descent on foot.

Here we had a view of two cascades, which fell the opposite side to an immense height; and also of the ruins of two old castles. These are called the mountains, valley, cascades and chateaux of Cordon, and a more grand scene cannot be formed.

I am thus particular in my description, because we were now in France, where we did not expect to meet with any thing so nearly approximating to the boldest scenes of Switzerland. On our last days journey to Lyons we met upwards of sixty waggons and carts going down to Geneva and Alsace, loaded with sugar, coffee, &c. from Lyons. Altho' it was early in the month of January, the weather was so mild and clear, that the women were all seated outside their doors in the village, employed either in knitting or spinning.

The city of Lyons is built principally on a strip of land lying between the rivers Rhone and Soane, about a mile and a half above their junction. It is not broad from river to river, but of great extent in length. The quays in the river are spacious, well paved and kept clean.—The Rhone is about as wide as the Thames at London. There are two permanent bridges across it, and three across the Soane. Both have an extremely rapid course. On the Rhone near the town shore, there are fifteen floating water mills kept in constant motion night and day by the rapidity of the current. On the right bank of the Soane, there is a range of very lofty hills, on which are scattered a number of summer chateaux, and many other considerable buildings. On these heights near to the river are still existing extensive remains of a Roman aqueduct, amphitheatre, baths, &c. in great preservation.

On the banks of the Rhone there is a very distant view of the mountains which divide Savoy from Dauphine, of a part of the Alps, and also of Mount Blanc, which tho' at 120 miles distance, is so prominent and clear, that the three projecting points are perfectly distinct to the naked eye; but the wonder ceases when we recollect that it is nearly 15000 English feet in perpendicular height.—Though there was nothing like frost or snow, or winter in any form while we were at Lyons, yet all those mountains are seen clothed with everlasting snow, which give them an extremely beautiful appearance.—Many of the public buildings at Lyons are extremely superb. The *Maison de Ville* is extremely large and handsome. The theatre is spacious; the old cathedral is an extensive and venerable building—the general hospital is a fine specimen of architecture, spacious and splendid in its appearance.

The houses have a lively agreeable exterior, and are mostly six stories high: the resistance to the revolutionary spirit brought down on this ill-fated city the severest vengeance of the enraged patriots. The history of its siege, its prisons, proscriptions and executions, and the demolition of many of its most magnificent private buildings, is a subject too painful for enlargement. All the feelings of sympathy and indignation are awakened by the contemplation of its still existing ruins. The guillotine had its station in the public square adjoining the hotel where we lodge. But notwithstanding the severity of its afflictions, the peculiarly advantageous geographical situation of Lyons, aided by the enterprise and industry of the surviving citizens, seems likely to overcome the shock which menaced its future existence. Many new and superb buildings are now erecting on the site of some of the late ruins. The silk manufactures are rapidly reviving, and meet with a brisk demand. The other manufactories which formerly flourished here, are also getting under way. In short, the perseverance and industry of the people appear admirably calculated to surmount every obstacle in the way to their assuming their former rank as the first manufacturing city in France. The government is also well disposed to give encouragement to its revival; and as an evidence of the sincerity of its patronage, has ordered a number of houses which were destroyed during the reign of terror, to be rebuilt at the public expence. The former population of Lyons was rated at 160,000: it is now reduced to 120,000. Nothing can exceed the beauty of its position when taken altogether—situated between two rivers—surrounded by enchanting landscapes and chateaux in every direction—and closing with the high snow-capped mountains of Savoy, Piedmont and Mount Blanc in the back ground. The inhabitants are all cheerful & gay, and pursue their former pleasures with as much *gaiety* and avidity, as if they had never tasted of misfortune. A stranger is soon reminded that he is in Lyons: for not only are his bed furniture, and window curtains of silk velvet, but even the rooms hung with silk damask. Sunday is very little regarded. The shops are all open, and business going on in the streets as on other days. The theatre and ball-rooms are unusually crowded in the evening. If a foreigner does not keep a journal in France, he will never see or hear any thing to remind him when it is Sunday.

The distance from Lyons to Paris is about 350 miles. There are two main roads; one by Dijon, the other by Moulins. We took the latter. When we arrived on the right bank of the Loire, opposite Roanne, we found that the *Permanent Bridge* of wood had been carried away the day before by an extraordinary fresh; and as there was no ferry or proper boats provided for such an accident, we were under the necessity of risking ourselves in a batteau. After we were embarked in our little skiff, I would have engaged to have made a pilgrimage to Mecca to have been out again. The current was so frightfully wild and impetuous, that we went down the stream apparently with the velocity of

* This you will say, is something of an Irishism, but I know of no better term to contradict it, to a floating bridge.