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From the Philadelphia Register.

Mr. EDITOR,

Having observed in your paper of Sept. 23d, an account of a phenomenon seen in North-Carolina in July last, and which has, no doubt, excited the attention of many persons as an extraordinary circumstance, I have taken the liberty of making some remarks upon it. Mankind in general are fond of whatever appears to be of the marvellous, and many good people who are unacquainted with the various phenomena of nature are apt to ascribe whatever they cannot account for, to supernatural causes. The writer of the account alluded to, seems to entertain an idea that it may be something more than the simple operation of the laws of Nature, where he says, "whether the above be accountable on philosophical principles, or whether it be a prelude to the descent of the holy city, I leave to the impartially curious to judge." Some will not give credit to the truth of the relation at all; some will ascribe it to a supernatural cause, and some to a cause purely natural. For my part I do not hesitate to give full credit to the account, and at the same time to ascribe it to the refraction, or reflection of light from the vapour arising out of the side of the mountain. In this opinion I am the more confirmed from well authenticated accounts, heretofore published, of such kind of optical illusion, seen in divers places at different periods. See Litch's Philosophical Magazine.

Though these curious and elegant phenomena are not peculiar to any age or country, they are now frequently seen on sea-coasts; and though in some respects common in such situations, they have hitherto been so little noticed by the intelligent part of mankind as to be scarce known to exist. Those which seem lately, to have more particularly attracted the attention of the curious, are those frequently seen, during the summer season, on the southern coasts of Italy, near the ancient city of Rhegium, which the peasants in their native tongue call Fata-Morgana; an account of which may be seen in Swinburn's travels.—They are, however, frequently noticed by the English, Erse, and Irish peasants, and denominated Sea-Fairies, and Fairy-Cattles. The Erse fishermen among the western isles of Scotland, frequently see represented in barren heaths and on naked rocks, beautiful fields, woods and cattle, with numerous flocks and herds grazing, and multitudes of people of both sexes, in various attitudes and occupations. These, as they know no such objects really exist, they constantly attribute to enchantment and fairies. They are also frequently seen on the coasts of Norway, Iceland and Greenland; on the eastern and western coast of South America, and even on the highest summit of the Andes. Some of these phenomena were seen near the town of Youphal in the county of Cork in Ireland, in the years 1796, 1797, and 1801.—The first was seen on the 21st of October, 1796, about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the sun clear: it appeared on a hill, on the county of Waterford side of the river, to a number of spectators; and seemed a walled town with a round tower, and a church with a spire, the houses perfect and the windows distinct. Behind the houses appeared the mast of a ship, and in the front a single tree, near which was a cow grazing; whilst the Waterford hills appeared distinctly behind. In the space of about half an hour the spire and round tower, became a broken turret. Soon after this change, all the houses became ruins, and their fragments seemed scattered in the fields near the walls. The whole in about an hour disappeared, and the hill on which it stood, sunk to the level of a real field. The hill and the trees appeared of a bright green; the houses and tower of a clear brown, with their roofs blue.—That the phenomenon seen in North-Carolina, on the Chimney Mountain was one of those Fata-Morgana, and occasioned by reflection in a dense vapour strongly illuminated by the sun, I have no doubt. This seems to be confirmed, by the circumstance of a rainbow having appeared in the same place to another person at a distance, there being a haze

in the atmosphere. We may conclude, from the whole, that the little girl who first imagined she saw a man on the mountain, saw her own image indistinctly reflected, and when her brother came, they not only saw both their images, but probably, the vapour forming different angles, upon the principle of the Polyhedron, exhibited their images multiplied as to appear like an army, which was proportionably increased by each accession of new spectators. That the images should appear of different sizes, might arise from the surfaces of certain portions of the reflecting vapour assuming a convex form, more or less:—and the confused indistinct appearances from some irregularity in the same. Their shining appearance might arise from the quality of the reflecting medium, and the strong illuminating rays of the sun falling on it in a particular manner; and the apparent motion of the images, for a change of position in those natural specula. Whether my hypothesis is just or not, I will not positively affirm; but think it much more rational than to ascribe it to a supernatural agency. Although the author of our existence and creator of all worlds, can work, should it seem meet to him, by supernatural means, and even render visible the celestial vehicle of spiritual existences, to our natural organs of vision, yet it is safest never to recur to miracles where phenomena can be accounted for upon natural principles. Whilst, therefore, I would devoutly wish that the enlightened citizens may embrace, without one sceptical doubt the sublime mysteries of the Gospel; I would desire them to be free from those superstitious notions which influence the ignorant and illiterate of the old world, to ascribe all uncommon or apparently mysterious occurrence to miracle, magic or witchcraft.

B. A.

October 1, 1806.

From the People's Friend.

TO THE HON. TH: JEFFERSON,
President of the United States.

Sir,

The unexampled feebleness and impolicy of your administration, has at length encompassed you with difficulties of too great magnitude and number, for a spirit and talents such as yours to encounter, with the smallest probability of success. The very arts by which you crept into power, and the wretched system of policy by which you have for so many years retained your popularity are now, in the natural course of their operation, revolving back upon yourself.—To take a hint from one of your own notable effusions, "The full tide of your experiments" is turning, now rolls back upon you and ebbs apace, and you are driven to an alternative the most grievous imaginable to your personal feelings.—Either to meet Spain and her mistress France in the field, or to betake you to the more innoxious folly of caricaturing natural philosophy, or writing notes upon gnats at MONTICELLO. Your situation is, indeed, so emphatically miserable, that not to pity you were a great crime, if not to condemn you were not a greater.

He who has the power, the purse, and the patronage of an opulent nation at his command, as you have, will never want defenders, however worthless he may be himself, or however wicked his purpose. You have had yours. Never did the mountains of Switzerland pour down into the rich plains of Europe, at the call of murderous ambition, a more fierce or unprincipled horde of hirelings than have graced your march through a ruinous administration of six years.—The ferments of the world were favourable to you in this respect, throwing up on the surface of society a superabundance of that kind of recreation which was most suitable to your purpose, and enabling you to enlist on your side, against the good of your country, a host of auxiliaries, who, found in you an object they could espouse without the slightest defection from their own feelings, and in yours, a system which they might defend without apostatizing from their own principles. In one respect they afforded you an unequalled advan-

tage over the good men who were your adversaries. They had learned in the French school to allow themselves no checks from those moral laws, which it was the primary work of the French revolution to destroy. Provided the end was attained, they felt no repugnance about the means by which they attained it.—The barriers of truth being long broken down, or else ever-leaped, the unbounded field of invention lay open to them, and there they ranged at large in search of attributes for your decoration, which your modesty never before dreamed of, and of facts, for your support, which never had existence. They were at call to enforce your purposes, by arguments which it was most competent to such heads and such hearts to help you to.—They were ready to scribble and to bawl as well as they could, and to murder the fame and the means of the best men of the land. So long, therefore, as a story, no matter whether true or false, told without a blush, argued upon with a heetering effrontery, and backed with influence and office, could serve for your support, all went well with you. So long as a scantling of puff paste praise, was strong enough to support you, you were safe. Your measures in any department could not want for panegyrics, since in every department there were emissaries and offices at your disposal. They had no court-creature specially paid and appointed to pandar the muses for a birth-day ode, you had a multitude of encomiasts who could falsify in prose; and who, however deficient in the inspiration which comes from the highest heaven of invention, were more than a match for any POET LAUREAT of them all, in venality. You may indeed be said to have converted the Union into a nation of pretors who hobble it out with very common substitutes for the poetical requisites. For knowledge, invention; malice for wit, and for harmonious numbers, an abundance of epithets of that precious kind, which originally sprung from the fans-culottiers of Paris. Without ever approaching or perhaps so much as knowing the name of, Parnassus, or sipping one solitary drop from the Pician Spring, a host of citizens—officers, or candidates for office—collectors, surveyors, postmasters, governors, sheriffs, bailiffs and watchmen, touched, not in the head, by the muse, but in the palm by the magistrate, have in half a letter, half race, &c. the official, contrived to life to prolate invention in support of your measures, singing your praise, and inventing the *discovery* of the state. Those as they invented you in office, and invented pretexts for your misconduct while there, will now invent causes for the danger you have brought upon the country; and in strict conformity to their inveterate habits, will produce any but the true ones. They, ingenious souls, once found out that your temporizing conduct was the way to insure respect and peace to the country—now, that contempt and war are dashed in its face, and they will find out that, not your temporizing conduct, but the reproaches of your political adversaries, and their exhortations to you to arm the country, have been the cause. They will say that it was not your timidity which tempted; nor your oversight of Miranda that enraged, but the insults offered to your friend Bonaparte by the Federal prints, which angered Spain and France into war. And it is likely that, with no less truth and modesty, they will, by and by, say that it was your hatred and the insulting language of yourself, your legislature, and your agents of the press to Great Britain which induced her to afford you, as probably she will, protection from your friend the Corsican. This farce however, draws near to an end—the hour of indignation, and the fiercer of ineffable scorn fit upon the public brow. The delusion is almost over, and the first shot that is fired on our Western possessions, will be the signal for rending in pieces that veil of artifice by which the true character of your administration has been concealed from the public.

I believe, Sir, I only repeat the universal opinion of mankind—a postulate which has never been controverted, when I say that between nations, as between individuals, the very best security for peace, is promptitude and capacity for

war; while on the other hand timidity not only excites contempt, but encourages encroachment, and invites attacks to others, may, without any harm, please their fancy by imploring the justice which they have a right to demand. But the chief executive magistrate of a country, who, cherishing his fancies, or shivering under his fears, supplicates for his country that justice which she has a right to demand, and, but for his impolicy, would have the power to enforce prevaricates with his duty, prostrates his country's honour, and if war ensues (which is most likely) is not only culpable of war by neglecting the legitimate natural means of avoiding it, [preparation] but stands in the sentence of having aggravated the evils of war, with the disgrace of application despised, and the ignominy of humiliation rejected with disdain.

While I thus address you, Sir, I own that, different from my language to Mr. Randolph, I speak not prospectively with a view to any amendment in your sentiments, or any alteration in your system—you are too far descended into the vale of years for the one, and you are too near the end of your power for the other. And, to speak my mind, I very much fear that your soil was from the beginning too sandy for improvement. My purpose is, to make you turn your eyes backward on your past conduct and persuade you to repent. Do, Sir!—Contemplate what you have done—view it attentively in all its natural aspects and in all the attitudes into which your ingenuity can throw it; and then, ask your heart what confidence in your conduct, what faith in your professions can you reasonably expect from your country, or from the nations of Europe. I will for the present put the disgraceful affair of Africa and General Eaton out of the question; and come at once to the more important affair of Spain. By the meanest diplomatic traffic with France and Spain you committed your country to their derision and contempt, and while you tempted their cupidity, exposed your country's weakness. You endured their encroachments, their spurns, their scorn. You suffered the councils of your country to be dictated to, and its chief executive magistracy (in your person also) berated and insulted by their ambassadors. And all for what?—You will say, to avoid war. What!—to avoid war with Spain indeed, when the union rings with imputations against you of being engaged in subtle underworking hostility against her, and of holding privacy with one of her subjects who was engaged in a plan, which however laudable in its views, was treason to that country. Is such the peace which America ought to enjoy?—Is such the war fit for America to fight in? A peace obtained by abject humiliation—A war incurred by detected treachery. The opinions respecting your privacy with Miranda, are, so far as regards the country, just as mischievous as if they were proved, and must so remain until they shall be disproved.—Till then, the pervading sentiment will be, that while you were soothing Spain from fear, you had a dagger for her concealed in your bosom.

And now, Sir, let me ask you a question. Are you—can you be so far advanced in impairment of faculties, as to entertain a hope, that all which passes so very current here, will escape the notice of the monarchs of Spain and France? Can you flatter yourself, that every item of the MIRANDA affair, with the trials of Mr. Smith and Mr. Ogden—The speeches of the counsel—the testimony of the witnesses who appeared at the trial—the causes for the non-appearance of those witnesses who did not appear, the verdict of the juries, the honest and legal conduct of your friend, Judge Talmadge—together with the whole of that disgraceful dance which you are said to have the honour of leading up, and all the straggling and plungings of your partisans, in their despair for you on that occasion—Can you, I say, flatter yourself; that the whole of it has not been talked of, freely, at St. Cloud and at the Escurial?—Lay not that foolish fondling hope to your heart—You will soon be convinced to the contrary.—You will soon find your supplications for peace,