

Communications.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

This is the age of wonders—of Mormonism, Anti-masonry, Mrs. Royall, and the Comet.

The incredulous and uninitiated blindly mistook the first, for the incoherent and senseless ravings of madness and fanaticism. But, in later years, its "sublime mysteries" have been revealed to hundreds of devoted Mormons, and are by them believed to lead to a knowledge of the "true God."

It was reserved for this "enlightened age," that Masonry, which our unsuspecting progenitors believed to be a wise and benevolent institution, should be demonstrated to conceal beneath its garb, principles subversive of public justice, and designs hostile to public safety.

In the same spirit of enlightenment, an ignorant black fanatic conceives himself delegated by heaven, to effect "universal emancipation." Associated with a few others, a massacre is commenced. Their pious courage is soon exhausted. They are dispersed without force and apprehended without resistance. Suddenly our whole black population is corrupt, dangerous and treacherous. All the horrors of servile war are conjured up. "Woman's eye is wet with tears and man's cheek grows pale."

A most eminent example of the "march of mind in the 19th century," is furnished in the person of the renowned Anne Royall, whose incomparable "Paul Pry" exposes the innocent flirtations of self-denying parsons and pious young ladies—raves against the Tariff—and praises Gen. Jackson.

But of all the wonders, of which our age has been so conspicuously prolific, the climax is furnished in the Comet—which, in the language of a very moral writer in the Norfolk Herald, is to cause "old Time to bathe his weary feet in the ocean of eternity."

We had supposed that the superstitious terror, with which these erratic visitants were regarded in the early ages of the world, had been dispelled before the lights which civilization and letters had diffused among the nations. During the remote period alluded to, Comets, as all know, were supposed to portend calamity and desolation. War and tumult—pestilence and famine, were believed to be the inevitable consequences of these phenomena. But the investigations of modern astronomy have shown them to be constituent parts of the great whole of the universe—and that, like planets, they revolve around the sun. So advanced is science upon this subject, that notwithstanding the great eccentricity of their orbits—and the consequent duration of their time of revolution, the period of their return is foretold with the greatest accuracy.

That all bodies are drawn to each other by attraction no one will pretend to controvert, and that this attraction is always in proportion to the quantity of matter which the bodies contain, is equally true. Hence the attractive power of large bodies, as the sun and planets, is very great, even at immense distances. In addition to this property, bodies are surrounded by an atmosphere proportionate in density and extent to their magnitude. From the fact that the atmospheres of Comets are

frequently visible to the naked eye, astronomers have inferred that they are denser than those of other celestial bodies.

In obedience to the principle to which we have alluded as governing all the phenomena of matter, the velocity of Comets, when descending to their perihelion, is continually increasing—so that when they have arrived at the interior of our system, their atmosphere might be so much elongated, as to cause a portion of it to be abandoned to the more powerful attraction of some other body. Supposing this body to be our earth, a Comet half its size having reached the point where the attraction would be equal, must necessarily abandon a portion of its atmosphere to the greater attraction of the earth; for as that point would be as much nearer the Comet, as the Comet is smaller than the earth, it follows, that any part of the atmosphere of the former which should come within the greater attraction of the latter, would descend to its surface. So that it is not philosophically impossible that a Comet, by a very near appulse to our earth, might sensibly affect it. The correctness of these views will be obvious, when we recollect that the moon, at the distance of more than 200,000 miles from the earth, produces the flux and reflux of the ocean.

All that is established, however, is the possibility, that a Comet, might by a very near approach to our earth, sensibly affect, perhaps derange it. But the point at which its influence would be thus felt, philosophy even cannot determine. According to Halley, the Comet, which he observed in 1680 and which is the same that will be visible to us during the present year, was within 4,000 miles of the earth's orbit. By comparing this fact, so clearly stated by this accurate and scientific observer, with the calculations of the German, French and American astronomers, relative to its reappearance in 1832, it will be seen that there is not the slightest foundation for the fears that have been recently expressed upon this subject. It will be recollected too, that there are many circumstances, which, admitting its nearer approach, would be sufficient to prevent our earth from experiencing any positive effect. The earth's being in a distant part of its orbit might alone be sufficient to resist their mutual attraction—to say nothing of the amazing velocity of the Comet, which would enable it to pass so near the earth as to produce all their phenomena, and still be sufficient to bear it off again to its eccentric course.

It is somewhat calculated to excite our surprize, that men, professing a belief in Revelation, should originate and encourage the preposterous notion that the appearance of this Comet is to be the signal for universal dissolution. We are assured by inspiration itself, that many things are to be fulfilled before the fiat that "Time shall be no more" is pronounced. The scattered tribes are to be gathered in the Holy City—a thousand years of universal peace are to succeed—and another thousand, during which Satan is to be unbound. In fine, both philosophy and religion concur to establish the truth—that the apprehensions, which have lately prevailed to some extent through the country, originated in the same cre-

dulity that existed, when the first was in its infancy and the last had not dawned upon the world. X. Y.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

Mr. Editor: I have only a word to say to your correspondent Video. I should have attended to him last week, but neglected to do so until it was too late. I certainly have no disposition to treat any man's writings with injustice.

Video is mistaken when he says I identified him with Garretson, *et id omne genus*. It is true my language left room for an inference that I thought the fact "somewhere at least possible." And he is mistaken again if he supposes that I was alone in that opinion. So far as I heard public opinion expressed it regarded his strange production in no very favorable light. He is also mistaken when he talks about shooting white negroes.

I am willing, however, to receive Video's *ipse dixit*, as a sufficient explanation of his innocence of being an abettor of northern incendiaries or the deluded blacks who may wish to perpetrate another Southampton massacre. But what was the real motive of the writer I presume I shall never know until doomsday.

I will now drop this subject with my assurance that in no other way than *se defendo*, will I ever recur to it again. X. Y. Z.

CONGRESS.

SENATE.

Wednesday, Jan. 25.—Mr. Benton submitted resolutions calling for important information with regard to the Bank of the United States.

Thursday, 26th.—Mr. Marcy presented the memorial of David Henshaw and others, citizens of Massachusetts, praying for a charter, as a Banking Company, to take effect after the expiration of the term for which the present United States Bank is chartered. The memorial was ordered to be printed, and was referred to the special committee on the United States Bank. Mr. Wilkins, from the select committee on French spoliation, reported a bill making an appropriation of five millions of dollars for the relief of the sufferers by French spoliation, committed prior to September, 1800. Mr. Ewing laid on the table a resolution declaring the unconstitutionality &c. of removals from office, and the inexpediency of filling, by advice and consent of the Senate, any vacancies thus occasioned.

Friday, 27th.—The Senate was engaged for the greater part of the day in the consideration of Executive business.

H. OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, Jan. 25.—The House went into committee of the whole on the state of the Union, and took up the apportionment bill. Mr. Wayne concluded his argument against the establishment of 48,000 as the ratio. Messrs. Hunt, Bell, Patton and Polk, addressed the committee. The question on Mr. Hubbard's proposition to fix the ratio at 44,000, was negatived by a vote of ayes 105, noes 81. Mr. Howard moved an amendment to change the time of the bill going into operation, from the 2d to the 6th of March, in order that the present

weight of the Several States might be preserved in the electoral colleges, on the ensuing Presidential election; but before the question was disposed of, the committee rose and reported, and the House adjourned.

Thursday, 26th.—Mr. Archer, from the committee on foreign affairs, reported a bill giving effect to a commercial arrangement between the United States and the Republic of Colombia. The House went into committee on the apportionment bill, and after some time spent in the discussion of Mr. Howard's motion to amend the date of the commencement of the new apportionment, the motion was withdrawn by the mover. Several motions were then made to strike out 48,000 and insert various numbers between 45,000 and 60,000; all of which were lost, and the committee rose and reported the bill to the House without amendment.—Mr. Wickliffe then moved to refer the bill to a select committee, consisting of one member from each State; before the question was taken on this motion, the House adjourned.

Friday, 27th.—A bill for giving effect to a commercial arrangement between the United States and the Republic of Colombia was passed.—Mr. Mercer, from the committee on internal improvements, reported a bill for the erection of a bridge across the Ohio river at Wheeling.



PARBOROUGH.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1832.

Having employed a new carrier perhaps some of our town subscribers may be neglected—they will please inform us of it, should they not receive their papers regularly.

The Western Carolinian, published at Salisbury, in this State, by Burton Craige, Esq. has recently been enlarged and otherwise improved in appearance. It is now one of the largest of our State newspapers. We trust the enterprising and talented Editor will meet with merited encouragement. His prospectus will be found in our advertising columns.

The Comet.—In the preceding columns we have inserted some remarks on the Comet, furnished by an intelligent correspondent. The reader will also find in this paper, several speculations and calculations, copied from different papers, on this subject, which seems likely to absorb all others. We hope none of our readers will adopt the suggestion contained in one of the articles, that is, "not think it worth while to plant a crop this summer"—but we can see no impropriety in all of them "putting their house to rights."

Rejection of Mr. Van Buren.—The Washington papers inform us, that the nomination of the Hon. Martin Van Buren, as Minister to England, was rejected in the Senate of the U. States on the 25th ult. by the casting vote of Vice-President Calhoun. The injunction of secrecy having been removed by the Senate, the proceedings and several speeches made on the occasion have been published, the residue it is said will follow. The nomination was submitted to the Senate on the 7th December last; on the 27th, it was referred to the committee on foreign relations; on the 10th Jan. the committee reported; on the 13th, Mr. Holmes submitted a resolution, recommending the nomination to the same committee, instructing them to investigate the causes which produced the removals of the late Secretaries of the Treasury and Navy Departments, &c. and authorizing them to send for persons and papers, which motion after some de-

bate was laid on the table—the Senate then proceeded to consider the nomination, and on motion that it lie on the table, it was determined in the affirmative by the casting vote of the Vice-President, there being 21 yeas and 21 nays, viz:—

YEAS—Messrs. Bell, Bibb, Chambers, Clay, Ewing, Foot, Frelinghuysen, Hayne, Holmes, Johnston, Knight, Miller, Moore, Naudain, Prentiss, Robbins, Ruggles, Seymour, Silsbee, Tomlinson, Tyler.

NAYS—Messrs. Benton, Brown, Buckner, Dallas, Dickerson, Ellis, Forsyth, Grundy, Hendricks, Hill, Kane, King, Mangum, Marcy, Robinson, Smith, Tazewell, Tipton, Troup, White, Wilkins.

On the 24th, the Senate resumed the consideration of the nomination; and, on the 25th, it was rejected, by the casting vote of the Vice-President, there being 23 yeas and 23 nays, viz:—

YEAS—Messrs. Benton, Brown, Buckner, Dallas, Dickerson, Dudley, Ellis, Forsyth, Grundy, Hendricks, Hill, Kane, King, Mangum, Marcy, Robinson, Smith, Tazewell, Tipton, Troup, Tyler, White, Wilkins.

NAYS—Messrs. Bell, Chambers, Clay, Clayton, Ewing, Foot, Frelinghuysen, Hayne, Holmes, Johnston, Knight, Miller, Moore, Naudain, Poindexter, Robbins, Ruggles, Seymour, Silsbee, Sprague, Tomlinson, Waggaman, Webster.

Messrs. Bibb and Prentiss were absent—the latter on account of indisposition. The Opposition, it will be seen, presented an undivided front against the nomination, and were joined by Messrs. Hayne and Miller of S. C. Moore of Alabama, and Poindexter of Mississippi, who have heretofore been classed with the Administration party, but are now designated as Calhoun men. The confirmation of the appointment was opposed by Messrs. Chambers, Clayton, Foot, Webster, Clay, Ewing, Poindexter, Hayne, Miller, Moore, and Frelinghuysen—and was advocated by Messrs. Smith, Brown, Marcy, Forsyth, and Mangum. The principal ground of objection urged against Mr. Van Buren was, that whilst Secretary of State in his instructions to Mr. McLane, in relation to the West-India trade, he prescribed a course of diplomacy derogatory to the character of our country. This is said to be the first case in which the Senate have refused to confirm the nomination of a Minister who had already entered on his duties abroad. We are truly glad to perceive that the nomination was sustained by Messrs. Brown and Mangum, Senators from this State—from the Opposition, we neither ask nor expect any thing—but we much regret the rejection of the nomination, as we are satisfied that under existing circumstances 'no good can come of it.'

Rail Roads.—The following appears in the Norfolk Herald of last Friday:—"The citizens of Portsmouth are requested to meet at the Masonic-Hall, to-morrow evening, at half past six o'clock, to consider upon the propriety of applying to the Legislature to incorporate a Company to construct a Rail Road from Portsmouth to some point near Weldon, on the Roanoke. The citizens of the borough and county of Norfolk, and all others who feel an interest in the proposed road, are respectfully invited to attend."

Intense Cold.—A sudden change of the weather took place on Wednesday night last, since which time we have had a few days as cold as any we recollect ever to have experienced. On Thursday morning the thermometer stood at 13 degrees above zero; on Friday morning at 10; and on Saturday morning at 6—which is lower than was ever known in this place, so far as we have heard. The weather has since moderated.

At Washington City the thermometer fell below zero, on Thursday morning.

The Charleston Evening Post states that a stagedriver between Georgetown and Fayetteville had been frozen to death on the road, and that several others on the line had been severely frozen.

Fay. Obs. Jan. 31.

The Comet, which is to make its appearance in June next, is said to be the cause of considerable uneasiness among the more ignorant, in consequence