

THE PATRIOT.

VOL. I.]

GREENSBOROUGH, N. C. SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 1827.

[NO. 40

THE PATRIOT,

is printed and published weekly by
T. EARLY STRANGE,

At Two Dollars per annum, payable within
three months from the receipt of the first
number, or Three Dollars after the expi-
ration of that time.

No paper to be discontinued until all arrear-
ages are paid, unless at the option of the
Editor; and a failure to notify a discontinu-
ance will be considered a new engage-
ment.

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Not exceeding 16 lines, neatly inserted three
times for one dollar, and 25 cents for eve-
ry succeeding publication; those of great-
er length in the same proportion.—Let-
ters to the Editor must be post paid.

HINDOO WIDOWS.

From *Bernier's Travels.*

In regard to the women who actually burn themselves, I was present at so many of those shocking exhibitions, that I could not persuade myself to attend any more; nor is it without a feeling of horror that I revert to the subject. I shall endeavor to describe what passed before my eyes; but I cannot hope to give you an adequate conception of the fortitude displayed by those infatuated victims during the whole of the frightful tragedy; it must be seen to be believed. When traveling from Ahmedabad to Agra, thro' the territories of the Rajahs, and while the caravan waited in a town under the shade, until the cool of the evening, news reached us that a widow was on the point of burning herself with the body of her husband. I ran at once to the spot, and going to the edge of a large and nearly dry reservoir, observed at the bottom a deep pit filled with wood; the body of a dead man extended thereon; a woman seated on the same pile; four or five brahmins setting fire to it in every part; five middle aged women, tolerably well dressed, holding one another by the hand, singing and dancing around the pit; and a great number of spectators of both sexes. The pile, whereon large quantities of butter and oil had been thrown, was enveloped in flames, and I saw the fire catch the woman's garments, which were impregnated with scented oil mixed with sandarach and saffron powder; but I could not perceive the slightest indication of pain, or even uneasiness in the victim, and it was said that she pronounced with emphasis the words five, two; to signify that this being the fifth time she had burned herself with the same husband, there wanted only two more similar sacrifices to render her perfect according to the transmigration of souls; as if a certain reminiscence, or prophetic spirit, had been imparted to her at the moment of her dissolution. But this was only the commencement of the infernal tragedy. I thought that the singing and dancing of the five women were nothing more than some unmeaning ceremony; great therefore was my astonishment when I saw that the flames having ignited the clothes of one of these females, she cast herself head foremost into the pit. The horrid example was followed by another woman, as soon as the flames caught her person; the three women who had remained then took hold of each other by the hand, resuming the dance with perfect composure; and after a short lapse of time, they also precipitated

themselves, one after the other into the fire. I soon learnt the meaning of these multiplied sacrifices. The five women were slaves, and having witnessed the deep affliction of their mistress in consequence of the illness of her husband, whom she promised not to survive, they were so moved with compassion that they entered into an engagement to perish by the same flames that consumed their beloved mistress."

"As I was leaving Surat for Persia, I witnessed the devotion and burning of another widow: several Englishmen and Dutchmen, and Mr. Chardin, of Paris, were present. She was of the middle age, and by no means uncomely. I do not expect, with my limited powers of expression, to convey a full idea of the British boldness, or ferocious gaiety, depicted on this woman's countenance; of her undaunted step; of the freedom from all perturbation with which she conversed, and permitted herself to be washed; of the look of confidence, or rather of insensibility, which she cast upon us; of her easy air, free from dejection; of her lofty carriage, void of embarrassment, when she was examining her little cabin, composed of dry and thick millet straw with an intermixture of small wood; when she entered into that cabin, sat down upon the funeral pile, placed her deceased husband's head in her lap, took up a torch, and with her own hand lighted the fire within, while I know not how many Brahmins were busily engaged without. Well, indeed, may I despair of representing this whole scene with proper and genuine feeling, such as I expected at the spectacle itself, or of painting it in colors sufficiently vivid. My recollection of it, indeed is so vivid, that it seems only a few days since the horrid reality passed before my eyes, and with pain I persuaded myself it was any thing but a frightful dream.

"At Lahore I saw a most beautiful young widow sacrificed, who could not, I think, have been more than twelve years of age. The poor little creature appeared more dead than alive when she approached the dreadful pit. The agony of her mind cannot be described. She trembled and wept bitterly; but three or four of the Brahmins, assisted by an old woman, who held her under the arm, forced the unwilling victim toward the fatal spot, seated her on the wood tied her hands and feet, lest she should run away, and in that situation the innocent creature was burnt live.

Life of Napoleon.—A writer in the New York American, who has read the first and part of the second volume of this forthcoming work of Sir Walter Scott, after expressing a feeling of disappointment with the first part of the work, says, of that relating to the early period of the French Revolution,

"There is one point in which these views of the French Revolution will be most grateful to Americans. Sir Walter is eminently just to Lafayette. Indeed, we are acquainted with no history of these times which exhibits Lafayette in so respectful a light, whether as regards character, influence or abilities. His motives are represented as pure; his influence as great, and, with but one exception, properly and even generously exercised: he is acknowledged as the leader of his party, and be-

comes without influence by the diminution of that party; and, lastly, his treacherous imprisonment by the Prussian Monarch, is justly and warmly condemned. Some of the characters of the Revolution are admirably sketched. Danton, Robespierre, and Marat, are separately discriminated and marked out by a few striking touches, which convey in brief space excellent outlines of their character. But the description of the more remarkable events—the storming of the Bastille, the attack on the Palace of Versailles, and particularly the massacre of the Swiss Guards, are described with the same immitable hand, which gives so much interest to the imaginary mob at Edinburgh, in the Heart of Mid Lothian. Indeed, the interest wonderfully thickens as we advance towards the fatal period of the birth of Napoleon, until just before the trial of the king, the work has the enchanting interest of a romance. Its publication may, therefore, be expected with the certainty of the greatest gratification and enjoyment by the reading public.

From the *Raleigh Register*

Militia.—A Board of officers was recently held at Washington City (at which General Winfield, Scott presided, and of which General B. Daniel, of this City was a member) of whom it was required by the Secretary of War to make a Report on the organization of the Militia, stating the deficiencies of the organization, and recommending such Remedies as in their judgement, will render our Militia as skilful and effective, as it is brave and patriotic.

We have just been favoured with a copy of this valuable Report, with the voluminous Documents appended to it, & but for the Debates and Proceedings of our Legislature, we should at once publish a copy of the Report. All we can at present do is to state some of its outlines, with a promise to insert the Report itself, as soon as we can find room for it.

The defects of the present system are stated to be the excess of numbers, which the act of 1792, holds to service; the ordinary musters are deemed to be useless, or worse than useless, from the want of a proper system of instruction; but a small portion of the Militia is at present armed and, according to the present appropriations made by Congress for this purpose, it would require a period of 75 years to arm the whole body, the want of instruction in discipline, &c. &c.

The remedies proposed for those defects are, a new enrolment and organization of the Militia and a plan for Camps of Instruction, a proper system of instruction is in preparation, the full age of 21, has been assumed by the Board as the best period for the commencement of service in ranks of the Militia, deeming it unnecessary, in time of peace, for the government to interfere with the ordinary control of parents, guardians and masters over minors, and they believe it will not be necessary for raising a Militia force of 400,000 men for the Union, (which they deem sufficient) to enrol men beyond the age of 29 or 30. Camps of Instruction are recommended for the officers from a belief that the tactical experience obtained by them would be imparted to the ranks in such trainings or musters as the several States shall prescribe—the maxim that good officers make good Soldiers, having the support of universal experience. These Camps to be held in each division of the Militia, to

continue for ten successive days in every year, under the command of the senior officer of the division as Proper Instructors of each Camp, to be employed and paid by the Government of the United States. The Secretary of War, on application of the Executives of the several States, to provide competent Instructors, by selections from Officers of the army, &c. It is proposed also that the General Government shall pay every Officer at the rate of \$1.50 or \$1.25 per day while encamped besides five cents a mile for travelling. Proper Musicians are also to be provided and paid. The whole annual expence to the Union is estimated, will be from \$200,000 to \$300,000 per annum, a small sum, in our opinion for the accomplishment of so great and desirable an object.

The Indian War!—We have heard by a private and respectable source, that a gentleman direct from Florida had met the Georgia Group within about 40 miles of Talahassee. The disturbances in that quarter have been quelled, by the vigilance and activity of the forces in Florida, in apprehending the Indians who had lately committed the murders and depredation—Col. Everard Hamilton, who commands the Georgia Cavalry, was proceeding to Talahassee, where he would have an opportunity, and from whence he would make an official return of the expedition, &c. to Head Quarters. Thus, we believe, has terminated the war.

POSTSCRIPT—The ship Florida, from Liverpool to New-York, in the very short passage of 25 days, brings the important news that Spain has declared War against Portugal. The Princess Regent has solicited aid of England, and his Majesty's message, with the debates upon it in Parliament, is replete with great interest—they have eventuated in the most active preparations for the immediate embarkation of 5,000 troops for Portugal, four squadrons of which are cavalry.

Mr. Canning in the debate on this subject said in conclusion "the object of this measure is not War, it is to preserve Peace," (great cheerings)—if you do not go to the aid of Portugal, she will be disgraced and then comes War in the train of degradation."

This debate took place Dec. 11th, and on 13th Parliament adjourned until the 8th of February. Mr. Peel moved the adjournment, on account of Mr. Canning's indisposition, in consequence of his great exertions on the preceding evening.

England and the United States.

An intelligent American gentleman now at London, who is every way competent by education and observation, to form judicious deductions, writes to his friend in New York as follows:

"The condition of England at this time, is any thing but cheering. The TARIFF SYSTEM is the heaviest BLOW she ever received from our country. She begins to feel its operation, and seeks to quarrel with us about the northern boundary. The real fact is, that war is to be waged, not with our country, but with its prosterity. The United States have hitherto afforded the best market for her manufactures. It is now diminishing—and Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham, feel the vibration of every loom that is erected in our country.—England is in danger also of losing much of the continental market France, Holland, Russia, Germany, &c. are patronizing manufactures to an extent that fills the wisest heads in England with dismay.