

Supplement to the American.

WASHINGTON CITY, April 27.

On Friday the Wasp sailed from the Eastern Branch for England. Mr. Parviance is a passenger.

We have received late London prints, containing in great detail the trial of Sir Home Popham for an alleged breach of orders in leaving the Cape of Good Hope on the expedition which issued in the capture of Buenos Ayres. Although, in a high degree interesting, it is too long for insertion entire in our columns. There is, however, one part of it of which we shall republish all the material circumstances, that part which proves that *Mineral's* expedition was not met by the expected British assistance, and particularly by Mr. Pitt.

We have likewise received a pamphlet, containing an abridged view of the arguments of counsel in the late examination of Aaron Burr, at Richmond; but as the publication is protected by a copy right, we are prohibited from republishing the speeches at the length they are given, and to give only an abridgement of an abridgement would be very unsatisfactory.

We have also received the French *Minuteur* to the 5th of May, and the *Leyden Gazette* to the 31 of the same month. They supply no news of much importance, but contain several interesting details which we shall notice in our next.

RICHMOND, April 24.

On Saturday morning last two buildings on the Cross Street near Shockoe warehouse, were consumed by fire. One of them the counting-house of Wm Brown & Co—the other a dwelling house. All the papers and books of the company, and most of the articles of value were saved. Fortunately the air was perfectly calm, or the warehouse, with all the tobacco in it, must have been destroyed.

On Wednesday night, another fire broke out in a kitchen back of Mr. Winton's hatters' shop, occupied by J. H. Fasbender, watchmaker. It was entirely consumed. No other loss was sustained.

CHARLESTON, April 15.

Extract of a letter, received yesterday, by the *Ceres*, Captain Webber, from an eminent mercantile house in Liverpool.

"The rumours which have been for some time in circulation of signal successes obtained over the French on the continent, having in a great measure proved to be unfounded; cotton, which became pretty brisk on the faith of these reports has suffered considerable depression in point of sale—the prices are steadily maintained nor do we imagine, from the present low prices, the article will suffer any material diminution.

PRICE CURRENT.

Cotton, Sea-Island	22s.	2s. 3l.
Clean and good Staple	21s.	2s. 2d.
Upland	15s.	17l-2d.
New Orleans	17s.	19d."

American, AND Commercial Daily Advertiser.

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1867.

The following interesting article, communicated for publication in the American, is from the pen of Gen. Wilkinson. It has been on hand some time, and we embrace the opportunity of a supplement to give it publicity. It shall be concluded to-morrow:

REFLECTIONS ON THE FORTIFICATIONS AND DEFENCE OF THE SEA PORTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE geographical position of the United States opposes strong obstacles to the rapacity and ambition of the old world; but it neither secures them against political casualties, nor exempts them from outrage and invasion; and if we are to estimate the future by the past, we may rationally conclude that our industry and

enterprise, our progressive wealth and improvements, while they affect the fears of some nations, may excite the jealousy of others; and it is a military axiom, that precaution is the parent of safety, and security the precursor of misfortune.

Our natural indolence discourages abstract enquiry, and to save the labour of investigation, we too frequently, with blind confidence, adopt the opinion of others; hence general conclusions are deduced from solitary incidents. Fashion beguiles the understanding—names sanction errors—false ideas obtain, and the torrent of opinion bears down the judgment.

To exemplify these truths in their application to military life, we need but retrospect the conduct of the French and British engineers, pending the conflict of those nations on this continent, and review the systems of defence adapted not long since for the protection of our towns and harbours.

The first posts erected on the frontiers of the British Colonies and of Canada, were calculated for defence against small arms merely, without other regard to ground than its proximity to running waters; and when armies were put in motion with artillery and their arsenals, either defective knowledge or local attachments, decided in favor of the original occupancies, for the erection of regular fortifications, scientifically constructed, which were overlooked by heights, from whence men's feet might be reckoned on their parades. Such was Tyconderoga, built by the French, and such were Crown Point, Fort William-Henry, Fort Edward, Fort Pitt, and others erected by the British. Immense sums were lavished, and great labor bestowed on works destined to impede armies and protract sieges—when in fact, the first glance of an invasion exposed to him a choice of ground, from whence a single battery piece might compel their garrisons to surrender at discretion. It is true General Abercrombie, morally as well as physically blind, declined to avail himself of those advantages, and preferred the assault of the French lines before Tyconderoga, where he was repulsed with slaughter—and yet General Amherst afterwards followed his footsteps. Such is the influence of example—but fortunately for him, found the French too feeble to offer resistance against his superior force.

It would appear that our maritime defences have originated in grounds not less superficial and fallacious, and that the result of Sir Hyde Parker's fruitless attack of Fort Moultrie, and that against Fort Mifflin, under the orders of Lord Howe, left such impressions on the American mind in favor of fixed batteries, that we have deemed it prudent to commit to their protection exclusively, our most vulnerable points & important interests; whereas if we had taken the trouble of a moment's consideration, the delusion would have been dissipated, and we should have perceived that if Sir Hyde's squadron could lay ten hours before Fort Moultrie, and then sail away, he could have passed and repassed it with safety; and that the attack of Lord Howe was confined to a narrow channel, obstructed by a *chevaux de frise*, and the attacking ship *Augusta* took fire by accident from her own batteries, before the assault could have been pressed to one extremity. To these re-

lections we might have added the important fact, that on the 12th July, 1776, two British frigates and three tenders passed all our batteries at New-York, in the face of day, and in the presence of General Washington, who observes on the occasion in his letter to the President of Congress, "They ran past our batteries up the North River without receiving any certain damage that I could perceive, notwithstanding a heavy and incessant cannonade was kept up from our several batteries here, as well as that from Paulus Hook."

Thus much is premised to palliate past errors—to aid future enquiries, and illustrate the subject of these reflections, which may not I hope be deemed either presumptuous or affected.

In the course of duty some years since, I had occasion to direct my attention to several of our most important sea ports, and their defences, which I found not only insufficient to resist invasions, but to repel predatory attacks. I will apply these observations particularly to New-York and New-Port, on whose fortifications the heaviest disbursements have been made—and I hazard nothing when I assert that they are insufficient to resist invasions; because landings may be effected beyond the range of their heaviest metal, and because their works are commanded by circumjacent heights; or to repel predatory attacks, because they cannot obstruct the passage of a vessel of war, and being erected in a lance of the objects to be protected with their batteries to the front, when once passed they lose all power to annoy an invader, and of course our town would be exposed to his deprivations.

Struck by these reflections I was led to enquire minutely into the efficacy of the works I had surveyed, and of the merits of fixed batteries for the defence of our harbours in general; and after the most deliberate examination, I found the former to be injudiciously sited, badly planned, and constructed generally of defective materials;—and the following objections against fixed batteries on the plan we have pursued, were suggested by the occasion:—1st. Their immobility destroy their utility, unless a narrow crooked channel should oblige vessels to approach them within point blank shot; which, if a 24 pounder may be estimated at 650 yards and render a change of wind necessary to carry such vessel beyond the reach of their guns—

2nd. They are generally so much elevated above the water, that when a vessel comes within point blank shot you are obliged to depress the muzzles of your guns to bring them to bear, which retards your fire, and renders it extremely precarious.

3rd. Because it is by accident only a cannon can be pointed to hit an object when in motion, & every moment changing its position.

4th. Because in unobstructed channels, no matter what their direction, a vessel with wind and tide, may not be exposed to your effectual fire more than ten minutes.

5th. Because optical delusions prevent us from ascertaining distances by the eye, with sufficient precision to regulate the aim of a cannon ball against any given object beyond point blank range.

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