

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

Annapolis, Thursday, Nov. 5.

Theodorick Bland, esq. (late a judge of Baltimore county court,) one of the commissioners sent by the President of the U. S. on a mission to South-America, arrived at Philadelphia, on Thursday last, in 106 days from Valparaiso.

The U. S. sloop of war Ontario, Capt. Biddle sailed, about the middle of June from Valparaiso for Columbia River.

Accounts from Indiana of Sept. 15, mention that the vine-yards in that state present the most beautiful appearance, and promise an abundant vintage to reward their industrious cultivators.

The American Missionary Society have established a mission to Jerusalem, and have appointed the Rev. Mr. Fish and the Rev. Mr. Parsons, their missionaries.

The Editor of the Carlisle (Pennsylvania) Spirit of the Times says—“We have good authority for stating that the notes of the following Banks are not worth ten dollars per hundred, out of the immediate vicinity of their several places of location, viz.

- Carlisle Agricultural Bank, Juniata Bank of Pennsylvania, Greencastle Bank, Bank of Marietta, Beaver Bank, Uniontown Bank.

For the Md. Gazette.

“Ac mihi quidem sepe numero in summo hominem ac summis ingeniiis preditos intuenti, querendum esse visum est, quid esset, cur plures in omnibus rebus quam in dicendo admirabiles existissent.”

The above reflection of Cicero seems to be adapted to the state of eloquence in our own country, and in the present age. The study of eloquence, for whatever reason we are unable to account, has of late years been most shamefully neglected. True, the fire of extraordinary abilities has sometimes blazed forth amid the surrounding darkness, and diffused a warmth and a lustre unrivalled perhaps in any period of the world. But how rare are the instances and how seldom are they improved by study, or in young men, by the exercise of any of the means necessary to a full preparation for an appearance before the public.

Why is it that those schools for the formation of eloquence, and indeed for the acquirement of general information, calculated for any sphere of action, I mean Debating Societies, have fallen into neglect? Is the talent of the modern student so far superior to that of our illustrious forefathers as to need no preparation of a practical nature, necessary to an appearance at the bar, the pulpit, or the councils of our country? And is there not, in each of these scenes of oratory, an ample field on this our soil of freedom, for the culture and growth of eloquence, and of every species of useful literature, as its indispensable concomitants? May we not venture to assert, that the opinion of Dr. Blair, (who states that the field for eloquence among the moderns is not so extensive as that in which the ancients reaped,) is controverted by the rise & growth of the American republic?

And shall the city of Annapolis still bow her head to the fury of the storm which has assailed her, by the prostration of her once renowned seminary of learning, through the distractions of party spirit, and by the rapid growth of a commercial metropolis in her neighbourhood?

Shall this city, which at one time flourished the Athens of our confederacy; which was the place of resort, not only for the students of this, but many of our sister states, for completing their studies, and preparing them for their different avocations—Will she still continue to grovel in that state of inactivity and despair, in which a combination of untoward circumstances has placed her? We hope not; we trust that the students of professions, and others who may feel disposed to favour the progress of science, will lend their aid to its revival; and while they shed the tear of pleasure-mingled pain at the recollection of her once favoured, now abandoned seat, will unite their most earnest endeavours towards the formation of a Literary and Debating Society, as one mean of perhaps retaining in her bosom her few students, and of preparing for the change which, we confidently anticipate, must soon

in the disposition of the legislature to favour the progress of science.

Such as may be disposed to ridicule the idea of the formation of eloquence in such a school, must call to mind the first dawning of that splendid luminary who now stands conspicuous in the rising galaxy of Maryland oratory. In an institution, similar to one we propose to establish, did those talents, equally irresistible and commanding, first break forth upon the land of his nativity, and since receive the plaudits of an admiring world. True, none of us may equal him, but if we cannot obtain the first, there are a number of intermediate spaces which may be filled with honour.”

With a view of forwarding the establishment of a society of some kind, for the improvement of the mind, by a mutual exchange of opinions upon literary subjects in general, we propose that a meeting take place on the 10th Nov. instant, at the Ball Room, of such as are disposed to favour the undertaking, for the purpose of making arrangements for the execution of our design.

The author of these remarks has frequently heard, among his acquaintances, expressions of a desire to form some such association, and it is only from the knowledge that matters of this kind are long talked of, and frequently remain entirely unexecuted for the want of a commencement, that he has ventured to obtrude himself upon the public on the present occasion.

For the Md. Gazette. Mr. Editor.

My late New-York paper contains the following instance of a man voluntarily renouncing his liberty and returning to the penitentiary, whence he had been but a short time released. I wish it noticed, because it shows, in some measure, how far confinement is a punishment to the transgressor, and how little calculated institutions of the kind are, to deter him who fits once served a term in them, from relapsing into his old vicious habits, or to impress on his mind a dread of again being immured in their walls. Is it not probable, that if Almy had not been committed on his own application, that his eagerness to return would have stimulated him to the perpetration of some crime, for which the laws of the land would have sentenced him to undergo as a punishment, that imprisonment, which he sought after as a gratification? The enormous expense of penitentiary establishments to the states possessing them, if there was no other consideration more intimately connected with the public welfare, ought to excite a spirit of inquiry in legislators whether such institutions answer the objects contemplated by those whose humanity first caused their introduction among us.

“A man named John Almy, on Thursday applied to the police office, stating that he was discharged from the penitentiary on the 15th instant, that he had no means of support, and wished to be sent again to the penitentiary. He was accordingly the bearer of his own commitment. This is the second recent instance of a person desiring admission to the penitentiary; and the fact may possibly suggest some useful ideas to persons in authority.”

Communicated.

Died, on Tuesday the 27th ult. at his residence near Herring Creek Church, in Anne-Arundel county, in the 47th year of his age, Thomas Sellman, esq.

To judge of the loss which society has sustained in the death of this late valuable member, we have only to recur to the deep affliction of his bereaved family, the unfeigned sorrowing of his numerous friends, and the strong expressions of regret which burst from all those who had ever known him. His life afforded a bright example, how much an upright and benevolent heart, unassisted by station or power, can accomplish, when united with an active and prudent mind; how benign was its influence; how extended was its usefulness. And now that he has run his course, and sleeps, as we trust, in blessings, most richly does he deserve to have a tomb of orphans tears wept over him.

As a friend he was zealous and active; as a father and husband affectionate and careful; as a justice intelligent and impartial; as a christian humble, ardent and sincere. The loss of such a man have we to deplore.

“But yet remembering that the parting sigh invites the just to slumber, not to die, the starting tear we check, we kiss the rod, and not to earth resign him, but to God.”

From the London Observer of August 30.

Received at the Office of the Commercial Advertiser.

THE ARCTIC REGIONS DESCRIBED.

[The Arctic Expedition which has for several months attracted the attention of the public, proposes two distinct objects—to advance towards the pole, and to explore a northwest passage to China. These are, no doubt, splendid schemes; but in order to form a right estimate of the plan, and some anticipation of the probable results, we recommend an attentive perusal of the following article.]

The rigour of the Seasons within the Arctic Circle—long winter—formation of ice—bergs—congelation of the Sea—various phenomena.

After the continued action of the sun has at last melted away the great body of ice, a short and dubious interval of warmth occurs. In the space of a few weeks, only visited by slanting and enfeebled rays, frost again resumes his tremendous sway. It begins to snow as early as August, and the whole ground is covered to the depth of two or three feet, before the month of October. Along the shores and the bays, the fresh water poured from rivulets, or drained from the thawing of former collections of snow, becomes quickly converted into solid ice. As the cold augments, the air deposits its moisture in the form of a fog which freezes into a fine gossamer netting, or spicular icicles, dispersed through the atmosphere, and extremely minute, that might seem to pierce and excoriate the skin. The hoar frost settles profusely, in fantastic clusters, on every prominence. The whole surface of the sea steams like a lime-kiln; an appearance, called the “frost smoke,” caused, as in other instances of the production of vapour, by the waters being still relatively warmer than the incumbent air. At length the dispersion of the mist and consequent clearness of the atmosphere, announce that the upper stratum of the sea itself has become cooled to the same standard; a sheet of ice spreads quickly over the smooth expanse, and often gains the thickness of an inch in a single night. The darkness of a prolonged winter now broods impenetrably over the frozen continent, unless the moon chances at times to obtrude her faint rays, which only discover the horrors and wide desolation of the scene. The wretched settlers, covered with a load of bear skins, remain crowded and immured in their hut, every chink of which they carefully stop against the piercing external cold; and covering about the stove or the lamp, they seek to doze away the tedious night. Their slender stock of provisions, though kept in the same apartment, is often frozen so hard as to require to be cut with a hatchet. The whole of the inside of their hut becomes lined with a thick crust of ice; and if they happen for an instant to open a window, the moisture of the confined air is immediately precipitated in the form of a shower of snow. As the frost continues to penetrate deeper, the rocks are heard at a distance to split with loud explosions. The sleep of death seems to wrap up the scene in utter and oblivious ruin.

At length the sun re-appears above the horizon, but his languid beams rather betray the wide waste, than brighten the prospect. By degrees, however, the further progress of the frost is checked. In the month of May, the famished inmates venture to leave their hut, in quest of fish on the margin of the sea. As the sun acquires elevation, his power is greatly increased. The snow gradually wastes away—the ice dissolves apace—and vast fragments of it, detached from the cliffs, and undermined beneath, precipitate themselves on the shores with the noise and crash of thunder. The ocean is now unbound, and its icy dome broken up with tremendous rupture. The enormous fields of ice, thus set afloat, are, by the violence of winds and currents, again dissevered and dispersed. Sometimes impelled in opposite directions, they approach, & strike with a mutual shock, like the crush of worlds—sufficient, if opposed, to reduce to atoms, in a moment, the proudest monuments of human power. It is impossible to picture a situation more awful than that of the poor crew of a whaler, who see their frail bark thus fatally enclosed, expecting immediate and inevitable destruction.

Before the end of June, the shoals of ice in the Arctic seas are commonly divided, scattered and disjoined. But the atmosphere is then almost continually damp, and loaded with vapour. At this season of the year a dense fog generally covers the surface of the sea, of a milder temperature indeed than the frost smoke, yet produced by the inversion of the same cause. The lower stratum of air, as it successively touches the colder body of water, becomes chilled, and thence disposed to deposit its moisture. Such thick fogs, with mere gleams of clear weather, investing the northern seas during the greater part of the summer, render their navigation extremely dangerous. In the course of the month of July, the superficial water is at last brought to an equilibrium of temperature with the air, and the sun now shines out with a bright and dazzling radiance. For some days before the close of the summer, such excessive heat is accumulated in the bays and sheltered spots, that the tar and pitch are sometimes melted, and run down the ship's sides.

The ice, which obstructs the navigation of the Arctic seas, consists of two very different kinds; the one produced by the congelation of fresh and the other by that of salt water. In those inhospitable tracts, the snow which annually falls on the Islands or continents, being again dissolved by the progress of the summer's heat, pours forth numerous rills and limpid streams, which collect along the indented shores, & in the deep bays enclosed by precipitous rocks. There, this clear and gelid water soon freezes, and every successive year supplies an additional investing crust, till, after the lapse perhaps of several centuries, the icy mass rises at last to the size and aspect of a mountain, commensurate with the elevation of the adjoining cliffs. The melting of the snow, which is afterwards deposited on such enormous blocks, likewise contributes to their growth; and by filling up the accidental holes or crevices, it renders the whole structure compact and uniform. Meanwhile, the principle of destruction has already begun its operations: the ceaseless agitation of the sea gradually wears and undermines the base of the icy mountain, till, at length, by the action of its own accumulated weight, when it has perhaps attained an altitude of a thousand, or even two thousand feet, it is torn from its frozen chains, and precipitated with tremendous plunge into the abyss below. This mighty launch now floats like a lofty island on the ocean; till, driven southwards by winds and currents, it insensibly wastes and dissolves away in the wide Atlantic.

Such we conceive to be the real origin of the icy mountains or icebergs, entirely similar in their formation to the glaciers which occur on the flanks of the Alps and the Pyrenees. They consist of a clear, compact, and solid ice, which has the fine green tint verging to blue, which ice or water, when very pure, and of a sufficient depth always assumes. From the cavities of these icebergs, the crews of the northern whalers are accustomed, by means of a hose, or flexible tube of canvas, to fill their casks easily with the finest and softest water. Of the same species of ice, the fragments which are picked up as they float on the surface of the ocean, yield the adventurous navigator the most refreshing beverage.

It was long disputed among the learned, whether the waters of the ocean are capable of being congelated; and many frivolous and absurd arguments, of course, were advanced to prove the impossibility of the fact. But the question is now completely resolved; and the freezing of sea water is established both by observation and experiment. The product, however, is an imperfect sort of ice, easily distinguishable from the result of a regular crystallization: it is porous, incompact, and imperfectly diaphanous. It consists of spicular shoots, or thin flakes, which detain within their interstices the stronger brine; and its granular spongy texture has, in fact, the appearance of congealed syrup, or what the confectioners call water-ice. This saline ice, can therefore, never yield pure water; yet, if the strong brine imprisoned in it, be first suffered to drain off slowly, the loose mass that remains will melt into a brackish liquid, which in some cases may be deemed potable.

To congeal sea water of the ordinary saltness, or containing nearly the 30th part of its weight of sa-

line matter, it requires not an extreme cold, this process taking effect about the 27th degree on Fahrenheit's scale, or only 5 degrees below the freezing point of fresh water. Within the Arctic circle, therefore, the surface of the ocean being never much warmer, it, in the decline of the summer, soon cools down to the limit at which congelation commences. About the end of July, or the beginning of August, a sheet of ice in the space of a single night is formed, perhaps an inch thick. The frost now maintains ascendancy, and shoots its increasing energy in all directions, till it has covered the whole extent of those seas with a solid vault to the depth of several feet. But, on the return of spring, the penetrating rays of the sun gradually melt or soften that icy floor, and render its substance friable and easily disrupted. The first strong wind, creating a swell in the ocean, then breaks up the vast continent into large fields, which are afterwards shivered into fragments by their mutual collision. This generally happens early in the month of June; and a few weeks are commonly sufficient to disperse and dissolve the floating ice. The sea is at last open, for a short and dubious interval, to the pursuits of the adventurous mariner.

While icebergs are thus the slow growth of ages, the fields or shoals of saline ice are annually formed & destroyed. The ice generated from melted snow, is hard, pellucid, and often swells to enormous height and dimensions. But the congelation of salt water wants solidity, clearness and strength, and never rises to any very considerable thickness. It seldom floats during more than part of the year, though in some cold seasons the scattered fragments may be surprised by the early frost, and preserved till the following summer.

The whale fishers enumerate several varieties of the salt water ice. A very wide expanse of it they call a field, and one of smaller dimensions a floe. When a field is dissolved by a subaqueous or ground swell, it breaks into numerous pieces, seldom exceeding forty or fifty yards in diameter, which, taken collectively are termed a pack. The pack again, when of a broad surface is called a patch, and when much elongated a stream. The patches of ice are crowded and heaped together by violent winds, but they gain separate, and spread around in calm weather. If a ship can pass freely through the floating pieces of ice, it is called drift ice; and if it itself is said to be loose or open when, from the effect of abrasion, the larger blocks of ice are crumpled into minute fragments, this collection is called brash ice. A portion of ice rising above the common level, is termed a hummock, being produced by the squeezing of one piece over another. These hummocks or protuberances break the uniform surface of the ice, and give it a most diversified and fantastic appearance. They are numerous on the heavy packs, and along the edges of ice fields, reaching to the height of thirty feet. The term sludge applied by the sailors to the soft incoherent crystals which the ice forms when it first attacks the surface of the ocean. As these increase, they have some effect, but they are prevented from coalescing into a continuous sheet, by the agitation which still prevails, and they form small discs, rounded by continual attrition, and scattered three inches in diameter, called cakes. Sometimes these again unite into circular pieces, perhaps a foot thick, and many yards in circumference.

The fields and other collections of floating ice, are often discovered at a great distance, by that singular appearance on the verge of the horizon, which the Dutch seamen term ice blink. It is a streak of lucid whiteness, occasioned evidently by the glare of light reflected obliquely from the surface of ice against the opposite atmosphere. This shining streak, which always indicates to the experienced navigator, 20 or 30 miles beyond the limit of direct vision, not only extends and figure but even the quality of the ice. The blink from a pure white ice, appears of a pure white while that which is occasioned by snow-fields has some tinge of blue.

The mountains of hard and perfect ice, it has been shown, are gradually produced perhaps of centuries. Along the western coast of Greenland, prolonged into Davis's Strait, they form an im-

mass, which presents to the mariner a sublime spectacle, resembling at a distance whole groupes of churches, mantling castles, or fleets under full sail. Every year, but especially in hot seasons, they are partially detached from their seats, and whelmed into the deep sea. In Davis's Straits, those icebergs appear the most frequent; & about Duoo Bay, where the soundings exceed 300 fathoms, masses of such enormous dimensions are met with that the Dutch seamen compare them to cities, and often bestow on them the familiar names of Amsterdum or Haarlem. They are carried towards the Atlantic by the current, which generally flows from the north-east; and after they reach the warm-water of the lower latitudes, they rapidly dissolve, and finally disappear, probably in the space of a few months.

The blocks of fresh water ice appear black, as they swim in the sea; but show a fine emerald or beryl hue, when brought upon the deck. Though perfectly transparent, like crystal, they sometimes inclose threads, or streamlets, of air bubbles, extricated in the act of congelation. This pure ice being only a fifteenth part lighter than fresh water, most consequently project about one tenth as it swims on the sea. An ice berg of 2000 feet in height, would therefore, after it floated, still rise 200 feet above the surface of the water. Such projections may be considered as nearly the extreme dimensions. Those mountains of ice may even acquire more elevation at a distance from land, both from the snow which falls on them, and from the copious vapours which precipitate and congeal on their surface. But in general, they are carried forwards by the current which sets from the south-east into the Atlantic, where, bathed in a warmer fluid, they rapidly waste and dissolve. It may be known, by experiment, that if the water in which they float had only the temperature of 42°, the mass of ice would lose the thickness of an inch every hour, or two feet in a day. Supposing the surface of the sea to be at 52°, the daily diminution of thickness would be doubled, and would therefore amount to four feet. An ice berg, having 600 feet of total elevation, would hence, on this probable estimate, require 150 days for its dissolution. But the melting of the ice would be greatly accelerated, if the mass was impelled through the water by the action of winds. A velocity of only a mile in an hour would triple the ordinary effect. Hence, though large bodies of ice are often found near the banks of Newfoundland, they seldom advance farther, or pass beyond the 48th degree of latitude.

Within the Arctic regions, those suspended blocks remain, by their mere inertia, so fixed on the water, as commonly to serve for the mooring of vessels employed in the whale fishery. In such cases, however, it is a necessary precaution to lengthen out the cables, and ride at some distance from the frozen cliff; because the fragments of ice, which the seamen term caves, are frequently detached from the under part of the mass, and darting upwards, acquire such a velocity in their ascent, that they would infallibly strike holes into the ships' bottoms.

As heat is absorbed in the process of thawing, so it is again evolved in the act of congelation. The annual formation and destruction of ice within the Arctic Circle, affords a beautiful provision of nature, for mitigating the excessive inequality of temperature. Had only dry land been there opposed to the sun, it would have been absolutely scorched by his incessant beams in summer, and pinched in the darkness of winter by the most intense and penetrating cold. None of the animal or vegetable tribes could at all have supported such extremes. But, in the actual arrangement, the surplus heat of summer is spent in melting away the ice; and its deficiency in winter is partly supplied by the influence of the progress of congelation. As long as ice remains to thaw, or water to freeze, the temperature of the atmosphere can never vary beyond certain limits. Such is the harmony of the system; and all experience and observation forbid us to believe it to be subject to any radical change. Some years may chance to form more ice than others, or to melt more away; but it were idle to expect any thing like a general or permanent disruption of the glacial crust which binds the regions of the north. But even were this ice