

Virginia Gazette

AND

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Foreign Intelligence.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Paris, to his friend in London.

"SOME months since the following singular circumstance happened:—I had spent the evening at Paris, and did not return to Clignen-Court until past 10 o'clock. I immediately retired to my chamber, and was in the act of undressing, when I was surprised with the report of a gun or pistol; and instantly started with a cry of distress. The report was so loud, that I imagined it to have been a gun fired off in the garden, close to the house. I lost no time in taking my double-barrelled gun, which I always kept loaded, and hurried with my servant, who was also armed, into the garden. I instantly fired off my gun, and attentively listened for some time, but heard nothing.—We then conjectured, that it was one of the gardeners, who had fired off his gun, probably suspecting some idle people were lurking about the house, or were robbing the garden, which has frequently happened, as most of the families who have houses at Clignen Court, retire to Paris in the winter, and have only a gardener to take care of the house and garden. These gardeners frequently fired off their guns about nine or ten o'clock, to show that they were upon their guard; we therefore concluded that it was upon this account the gun was fired, yet could not account for the cry of distress that succeeded the report. The next day, however, my gardener came to me, and informed me that I had saved a gentleman's life, by critically firing my gun. It happened that a gentleman had spent the evening at Montmartre, and was returning from thence to Paris, by the way of Clignen-Court and Chapelle, as thinking it the safest road; he had not passed more than three-score yards from my gates, immediately under my garden wall, when a fellow fired a large horse-pistol at him, without saying a word; although it was fired within two or three paces of him, yet the balls happily missed him. The gentleman seeing another pistol in the villain's hand, he instantly closed with him, and threw him down; they grappled together for some time, but the robber proved the stronger, and got the gentleman under him; at this moment he cocked his other pistol to shoot the poor gentleman, when I fired my gun, little imagining the villain was so near me, or I could easily have taken him. Upon the report of my gun he fled with such precipitation, that he dropped his pistol, which was in the morning found cocked and loaded with a brace of balls. The gentleman thus providentially saved from assassination, had the presence of mind to observe the route the robber took, which was across the chaise to the great road leading from Paris to St. Denis. The gentleman then hastened to Chapelle, little more than a quarter of a mile from Clignen-Court, situated upon the road between Paris and St. Denis; here is a guard of the Marsechouffes; to them he related what had happened; three of them were up, and their horses ready saddled and bridled in the stable. They lost no time in the pursuit, for they took the robber before he got into St. Denis. It appeared that this fellow, whose name was Jean Mazurier, had followed the business of robbing for some years upon the roads about Paris, and had frequently eluded the vigilance of the Police.

"He followed some occupation at Paris, where he had a wife and family; but the better to carry on and conceal his practices, he hired an obscure lodging at St. Denis, from whence he would fall forth to commit his depredations, and afterwards retreat to one or other of the lodgings, as necessity required. In his apartments at St. Denis was found a great number of articles which he had plundered at various times. He was committed to the goal at St. Denis, and then put upon the wheel, where he was to remain till he died. The French expression is thus:—'Pour reparation condame avoir les bras, jambes, cuisses, et reins rompus vil, pour s'escauter de la haute justice, sur un echafaud vil, pour cet effet, sera dressé, au village de la Chapelle sur la grande route; ce fait, son corps mis sur une roue, la face tournée vers le ciel, pour y demeurer; tout, et si long tems, qu'il plaira à Dieu lui conserver la vie; et si biens acquis condames au roi.'

"This dreadful sentence I saw put in execution with all its horrors on the 18th inst. about 6 o'clock in the afternoon. The cavalcade arrived from Paris, the prisoner in a cart with his confessor, and the two executioners, attended by a party of the city horse, and of the Marsechouffes. In the rear were two or three coaches with certain officers appointed to attend executions. After the prisoner had spent about half an hour in prayer and confession, he mounted the scaffold, together with

the priests and executioners; the criminal was a most wretched spectacle, he was ragged and dirty, and his long black hair in great disorder; his beard had not been cut since his confinement; he was an uncommon tall, stout, well-made fellow; but a countenance the most diabolically horrid I ever beheld. One of the executioners appeared afraid of him, for he trembled exceedingly when he approached him, and was obliged to be encouraged by the other executioner to do his business. The unhappy criminal did not appear in the least terrified with his approaching fate; he calmly looked upon the horrid instruments of torture with surprising fortitude, and surveyed the immense concourse of spectators with attention.

"He seemed to lay himself down on the cross with as much indifference as a man would to sleep, and as the executioners were tying his legs and arms to the cross, he desired them to bind them fatter.—The principal executioner, with a large iron instrument, in shape something like a cricket-bat, gave him the coups on his legs, thighs, and arms, which at each stroke he broke; this he did with wonderful dexterity and alertness; he then gave him across the stomach, which is called the coup de grace. This stroke of favour is ordinarily meant to put the criminal out of torture; but it is sometimes given with greater or lesser force, according to the atrociousness of the crime.—Sometimes he is strangled immediately after the limbs are broke, but no such favour was allowed this criminal; he received only a very slight stroke across his breast, which but added to his misery. The executioners now took him from the cross, and trusted his broken limbs under his body, and tied him upon the wheel. The executioners then left him, and walked about the stage, conversing and laughing with the most savage unconcern. The confessor did not leave him a moment, but gave him all the spiritual comfort that was in his power, assuring him, that if he had repented, and confessed all his crimes, the Almighty God would have mercy upon him; and he doubted not but he would be in Heaven as soon as the laws of his country, which he had violated were satisfied; and that his sufferings were now nearly at an end; and begged him to reflect, that his Saviour had suffered greater tortures for the salvation of mankind. In this manner did he converse with him for more than two hours, the wretched sufferer frequently telling the confessor what dreadful agonies he was in, and praying to be strangled: But he never once groaned or cried out, except at each coup that broke his limbs.

"The confessor was seated so high the criminal, that his hair frequently touched the knees of the priest, who was so much affected, that he was in tears the whole time, and I believe could no longer endure the dreadful scene, for he went to the attending officers of justice, and to the executioners, and earnestly requested that they would put the unhappy criminal out of his misery, for that he had confessed every thing laid to his charge, and that it was now cruelty to let him suffer according to the full rigour of the law. After some conversation they acquiesced to the proposal of the worthy priest. The executioners then put a small cord round the malefactor's neck, and strangled him. The priest for some time did not think he was quite dead: The principal executioner, to convince him, put his fingers to the arteries of his temples, opened his eyelids, and, I think, opened his mouth, and touched his tongue.

"This horrid operation being ended, they united the body from the wheel, and put it in a cart, which immediately drove away, escorted by a party of horse to see it interred.

"The stage erected for this melancholy purpose was about eighteen feet square, and about eight feet high, the cross seven feet in length, and its diameter about four inches. It was placed horizontally in the middle of the stage, and notches cut in it for the limbs to give way more readily upon the fork.

"At one corner of the stage was the wheel, which had been one of the fore-wheels of a coach; it was fixed upon a piece of wood about three feet high, which turned upon its axis.

"The office of 'executeur de la haute justice,' in France, is lucrative, and hath not that infamous stigma attached to it, as in England; and to make it as respectable as possible, he is called a King's officer, and has certain privileges allowed him.

"The concourse of people to see this execution was immense; the tops of the houses were covered with spectators.

"The curiosity of the French to see executions is, I think, even greater than that of the English; but I am sorry to say, from my own observation, and that of others, the French appear to want that commiseration, and sympathetic feeling, which so eminently abound in the breasts of the English.

"When a criminal is once condemned, they say, it signifies little how much he suffers, because he deserves

it. This apparent want of humanity in the French, certainly proceeds from the nature of their governments; they are devoted to the will of their Prince; and as all law is supposed to proceed from him, they religiously pay obedience to his ordinances and mandates, as supposing the Grand Monarque as infallible in his temporal affairs, as the Pope is in his spiritual.

"When racks and tortures become familiar to the eye, they lose part of their dread; and spectators may become as callous to the sufferings of a criminal racked on the wheel, as multitudes are to simple hanging. At this execution, I never saw people less concerned. I heard several exclaim, when the limbs of the criminal were breaking, 'Sacre Dieu, cela est bien juste, il le merite bien.' In a country town where I resided, there was a man to be racked for murder. An English gentleman lodged opposite to the place of execution. The lady of the house, who was an Avocat's wife, congratulated him upon the fine prospect he would have of the execution, and begged permission to introduce some ladies, of her acquaintance, to enjoy the spectacle from his apartments; the gentleman shocked with her want of all delicacy and humanity, replied, that he was much surprised at her request, and asked how she could endure to behold the miseries of a fellow creature? To which she angrily replied, that she did not look upon him as a fellow creature; he was a savage, a beast, 'un chien enragé,' and deserved suffering the severest tortures, and she could behold him without pity.

"The gentleman, upon the day of execution, went out of town, and locked his apartments, which was such a disappointment to the Avocat's wife and her friends, that upon his return, he gave him notice to quit her lodgings, and called him 'un barbare Anglois.' There was some reason why this woman's spirit was uncommonly roused. The murderer had killed an Avocat of her acquaintance. The murderer suspecting this Avocat had cheated him in making his father's will, he went into the Avocat's office, and with a broad sword cut him to pieces; when taken, he was asked, what could induce him to commit so cruel a murder? He replied with all the sang froid possible, that he did not see there was any cruelty to kill an Avocat; that they were all frippons, and deserved to be put to death: However as there is no general rule without an exception, so it was in this case; the unfortunate Avocat was universally esteemed for his probity, and his fate was singularly melancholy, for he left eleven children unprovided for.

"A criminal that is condemned to be broke upon the wheel, is never acquainted with his sentence till he is led to the place of execution, and sees the engines of torture prepared for him: He may suspect the dreadful death intended for him; but he is amused with the hopes of pardon, or a sentence less severe than being broke, till the fatal moment arrives that is to undecieve him. There is certainly more appearance of cruelty than of mercy in this: But it is done with a view that the law should not be robbed of its victim by his own execution. It is also customary to give taile spirits to the unhappy criminals, by giving them a quantity of wine, almost to intoxication, just before they leave their place of confinement for execution.

"To conclude this long letter, to full of extraneous and digressive matter, I must observe, the government of no nation in the world takes so much pains, or puts themselves to so much expence, to bring criminals to condign punishment as the French nation; and though I should be very sorry to be an advocate for introducing punishment by torture in our almost complete constitution in England; yet it must be confessed that it is by this mode of punishment that property is more secure in France than in England. The dread of being racked upon the wheel, secures their houses from burglary; makes it safe travelling from one end of the kingdom to the other, by day or by night, without any apprehension of being attacked. The same may be observed of the metropolis, Paris, which from her excellent government secures her citizens from the depredations of abandoned miscreants. I once asked an ingenious Ex-Jesuit of my acquaintance (who had made the tour of Europe) why he did not visit England, he replied, that though he had great curiosity to see England, yet he could not think of going to a country where he was certain of being robbed, which he could not afford. Your English newspapers, said he, are always full of robberies and murders; and, till your rulers introduce the rack, and have an established Marsechouffes, I will never visit England. As to murders, I believe there are more committed in France than in England. Any person who will visit the Morgue at Paris, for one year, may be well convinced of the truth of this assertion; but they are principally committed in infamous houses, from whence the bodies are thrown into the river Seine; nor can I think it in the power of the police to prevent it."

PARAGONA, April 14.

One of our sailing pilots, being at the distance of two leagues from this port, encountered with a fish of enormous size, which did some damage to his vessel; but having, by great perseverance and address, and the assistance of another vessel, taken and secured it, they drew it ashore, where it excited infinite wonders, as it was supposed to be of the whale kind; no person could ascertain its species. It was 27 spans and a half in length, and 15 in circumference, in the thickest part of the colour of an elephant; it had a most prodigious throat, sharp teeth and small eyes; it was supposed to weigh about 75000 pounds.

LONDON, April 20.

A LETTER from Corunna, by the way of France says, that the Santa Maria, Don Antonio de Cebres, commander was arrived there from the Havana, after being plundered of several chests of dollars, and other things by the crew of an Algerine galley. The Spanish Commander exclaimed against their proceeding, saying, it was a breach of peace the Court of Madrid had made with the Dey. The Algerine Captain replied, that he had only acted according to his orders, which, if he had not done, his head must have been axerited.

MAY 26.

Extract of a letter from Pondicherry, May 21. A circumstance has occurred lately at Nellore, about a hundred miles to the northward of Madras, that has excited the attention of the curious.

A poor man, digging in a field, found a pot, containing a quantity of gold coins, most of which, he believes, destroyed for the sake of the gold. Some however, were preserved, and sent down to the Nabob. I have seen four of them; they are of the purest Gold, somewhat larger than a half guinea, and in the highest state of preservation, of a dull green, elegant, and correct. They are of the reign of the Emperors Trajan and Adrian; but, as this part of the world was utterly unknown to them or their subjects, it is a matter of much conjecture how these coins have found their way into so remote a corner.

We hear from Port Glasgow, that a creditor having a diligence against his debtor there, got a poinding executed, and was carrying away the articles on a cart. Among other goods carried off, were three barrels of herrings. The execution of the poinding was made in the debtor's absence, but he came home just after the cart had set off. His wife recalled what had happened, immediately he went out, and gave information to a customs house officer against the herrings. The revenue officer protested the informations, and seized the herrings for not being branded with the curer's name; also the barrel and cart, for being made use of in removing them, which were accordingly condemned before the justices of peace.

During the late war in America, a grenadier struck Captain Boscawen. A court martial adjudged him a thousand lashes; which sentence was so perfectly disapproved of, that General Howe ordered it to be torn, and the man to be sent back to England.

In a few days another officer was struck, from an idea the thing would be passed over; but mark the difference. In three hours the man was hanged! There was no more striking.

Every mail from Virginia brings an account of the rapid progress of General Washington, in joining rivers, by intercepting canals, and deceiving rivers upon regular sections, without locks. What are our British generals about?—Writing plays.

It is currently reported at Barcelona, that the Dey of Algiers has declared war against the Emperor of Morocco; and that one of his cruisers has lately taken a Sallice tower, after an obstinate resistance, and brought her into Algiers. It further says, the Captain and crew were treated in a very cruel manner, because they did not strike immediately after the Algerine Captain commanded them.

DUBLIN, May 31.

NOTWITHSTANDING the English papers continually set forth, with avidity, the distressed situation of America, the general want of money, and the insufficiency of American credit for the purposes of carrying on trade, &c. we however find by the latest account from India, (brought by the Cornwallis Indian, from China) that the five following ships were in that country, and in all likelihood would make very great returns:

- The Canton, Truxton, of Philadelphia.
- The Experiment, Deans, New York.
- The Hope, Bell, ditto.
- Empress of China, Green, ditto.
- The Grand Turk, Nicholson, Boston.

These vessels make the number of eleven sail of Indian already fitted out from different ports in the United States, since the commencement of the year 1783 for China and India. Besides which, there are two vessels gone from Maryland to the Isles of Mauritius, and one from Philadelphia to Cook's River, or the Great River of the West, situated near the North-west extremity of that continent, and purposely fitted out for the fur trade from that quarter to China and Japan, as described by very beneficially by Captain Cook.

KINGSTON, (Jamaica) June 30.

THURSDAY last anchored at Cove-Bay, the ship *Belifaria*, Captain Bell, in 23 days from Sierra Leone, off the coast of Africa, having on board a few new negroes purchased there for the markets on the Minquillo Shore and the Bay of Honduras. The above ship left from Plymouth on the 6th of April last, bound for Sierra Leone, with two other vessels for the same port, all in the same place, all in the service of government, and under the command of his Majesty's ship *Nantux*, which about five hundred and fifty blacks on board, who had been ordered into exile to that

island, as we have lately mentioned. Of 250 that were on board the *Belifaria*, no less a number than 100 died on the passage, of the putrid fever. What number may have died on board the other transports we are not informed of.

QUEBEC, June 14.

LAST Saturday morning, about 3 o'clock, the ship *London*, Captain Beattie, came to anchor before this city. The left Portsmouth the 21st of April, made Cape Ray the 17th of May, was entangled in ice from the 4th to the 25th, and afterwards got into the bay of islands in Newfoundland, which she left the 3d instant. In her came the Right Honourable Lady Dochester, with four of her children; her Ladyship landed about 5 o'clock. The lucky arrival of the *London* (whose fare was much dreaded from the great quantities of ice known to be in the gulph, and the number of vessels, that arrived the first of last week, without bringing any intelligence of her) diffused a general joy throughout the city, which was demonstrated in the city by illuminations, &c.

NEWBURY-PORT, August 1.

MONDAY last, Captain William Wier arrived here from Limerick—Captain Wier gives the following account of some remarkable incidents which occurred on his passage from this port to Ireland.

“On the 9th of March, in lat. 42. 4. N. long. 55. 40. W. I was called and informed by my mate that there was a large ridge of breakers; I immediately went on deck and saw what he called breakers. I altered my course from N. E. S. E. to S. E.—the appearance of breakers bearing N. N. E. and tending E. N. E. and W. S. W. At sunrise they appeared from mast head very much like the breakers on the Bar at Newbury-Port. By a good observation I found my mind eased on account of my quadrant, and in lat. 23 above. The 11th of March in lat. 45. 34. N. long. 55. 7. W. I was alarmed at nine o'clock at night with a very heavy thumping—I was on deck instantly, and to my great surprize found myself in a very large body of ice, which was near three or four feet thick, and a very heavy sea going, wind N. W.—The ice tending E. N. E. and W. S. W.—We soon got through, though it floot the ship's way for some minutes. The 13th, in lat. 44. 3. N. the weather very cold and the ice making very fast, at 8 o'clock A. M. I made a very large body of ice a head, which extended N. E. by E. and S. W. by W. I took ship to the westward, with a fresh gale from the S. S. W. at 10 o'clock P. M. came up again with the ice; run close along by it, and found it broken, though very thick: I was anxious to push through, and approached under easy sail and got through in an hour without any damage, and all appeared clear to the eastward. But to my great astonishment, at 10 o'clock P. M. I again met with a larger body of ice, which entirely stop'd the ship's way. In the morning the 14th I found myself entirely inclosed in a vast body of ice, and could not see any water from the mast head, excepting one small art hole into which I pressed the ship. At 10 o'clock A. M. I ordered my small cable coil'd round the bows, and my spare sails lashed round the ship's quarters and fides, likewise fenders all round the ship—when this was done, in about two hours, I was in 23 fathoms of water on Grand Bank, and had no alternative, but to drift with the ice, which inclosed me fast for nine days: In this dismal situation I lay, with my sails handed, till the 21st of March, seeing no sea from main top gallant-mast-head. In this condition I thought it prudent to prepare for the worst—I ordered my mate to prepare the long boat in the best manner; accordingly he raised her sides eighteen inches—my new forecalf was for the deck: He lashed in her one hoghead of water, one tierce of bread and a barrel of pork, not knowing how soon we should have occasion for her services. The 17th being very cold, wind N. W. attended with snow, hail and squalls, but no motion in the ship, the second mate and three of my people offered to attend me on the ice to take a view of an island of ice which bore from us W. S. W. We set out about twelve o'clock and travelled one hour and thirty five minutes before we came up with the island. We found aground in 23 fathoms of water, the main body of ice being fast by us, the current setting to the S. E. 2 1/2 miles an hour, as I judged after taking a view of said island. On our return to the ship, having been absent from her 3 hours, the island bore W. N. W. having altered four points. The 18th, 19th and 20th, all fall handed and no appearance of sea. The 21st the wind backed to the S. S. W. and S. E. heavy gales, attended with rain—We discovered from the top-gallant-mast head the sea foaming on the ice to the eastward. At 10 A. M. some small motion in the ice. At 12 the ice began to part in small holes. At 1 P. M. it began to part fast, and the ship in some small motion; in half an hour the ice was in great motion, and thumping hard against the ship, I gave orders to loofe the top sails, which were closed reefed before they were let, together with the fore stay-fall, in order to keep the ship from rolling deep.—Our situation was now become very dangerous, for about an hour and an half, the sea running very high, and the ice throng with such violence against the ship as made her tremble, but being new and strong withstood the shock.”

A letter from Mr. Benjamin Peafion, at Norton, in this Commonwealth, to his brother in this town, dated June 15th, 1787; contains the following remarkable account.

“Two or three men being at work in a field at Mansfield, were obliged, by the snow, to take shelter in an uninhabited house near by. While there, to their great surprize, they saw five or six white mice run from under the hearth and back again. One of the men proposed taking up the hearth, upon doing which, they found an infant's bones and skull, together with a knife lying by the side of the bones, the handle smooth-knove, the back very rusty, but the edge quite bright. It is thought, from what information they have been able to obtain, that the murder was committed about thirty years ago. Strange noises had been heard by a family which formerly lived in the house.”

PHILADELPHIA, August 10.

By advices from Cadix, dated 14th of June, 1787, to a house in this city, we learn, that in consequence of the late works of that place, and of St. Lazar, having been destroyed by tempestuous weather, the King of Spain had laid an embargo upon the exportation of salt, from every port of his dominions. The prohibition was expected to continue at least eight months—Many vessels from different parts of Europe, as well as America, had departed in ballast, in consequence of this restriction. The same advices mention, that there was also a scarcity of this article at St. Ubes, and that a number of vessels went to Spain for a supply for that place, had been obliged to return empty.

Extract of a letter from Naples, December 12. “In the excavation of Pompeii, a magnificent Roman building is discovered, having three spacious courts furnished with divers apartments, which are ornamented with a variety of paintings, and there are the remains of several fountains and baths; but not a single movable of value is found. The concourse of strangers resorting to this monument of antiquity is immense.”

The Parliament of Paris has just issued out new letters patent against the employment of preparations of lead for the correction and purification of bad wines. Those persons in Pennsylvania who drink or intend to drink the wines of France, would do well to imitate the natives of that country in the use of colic imbecility afterwards. This berry fortifies the stomach against the deleterious qualities of adulterated wines.

RICHMOND, AUGUST 23.

THE following extraordinary circumstance lately happened at Amxminster in England: The child of a genteel family, about three years old, was dangerously ill of the measles, which was very rare in town; his death was hourly expected, as one had died just before. A very near relation of the family, an intelligent person, paid great attention to these circumstances, and being informed that the second child was dead, he would be satisfied of the same; by seeing it himself; and having received from all the attendants an assurance that the child was certainly dead, and convinced thereof himself, he insisted on trying an experiment, and ordered a vessel of cold water, in which the child being fully immersed, it was afterwards wrapp'd completely in flannels, and so put to bed, where, being strictly attended to, after some hours a violent perspiration took place; and soon after life was very apparent, and the child perfectly recovered.

A few days ago was safely lodged in the public jail of this city, (from the information of one GREEN) John Price Poyey, for being accessory to the burning of New Kent Prison, and Clerk's Office, which contained all the records of the county court. Green being an accomplice, and the acting person, has turned states evidence.

About a fortnight ago, a negro woman belonging to Mr. Fountain of Gloucester, was delivered of four children; she and the children survived but a very short time after.

On Saturday the 18th instant departed this life in the 48th year of her age Mrs. ELIZABETH WYTHE, wife of the Hon. George Wythe, Esq. of the city of Williamsburg, born a very long and longering sickness which bore with the patience of a true Christian. Amiable in her disposition, engaging in her manner, and possessed of every virtue which could render her beloved in this world, there can exist not a doubt of her happiness, in that to which she is gone. As a retrospect of her life could awaken no sigh, the prospect of her dissolution could cause no fear. An unaffected piety, which strongly marked her character, supported her in the last awful period of her existence, and she resigned her soul to that Being who governs, without a murmur at the divine decree. A life thus virtuous; an exit thus composed; should afford alleviation to the anguish of her friends. The voice of reason, bowers, steals, but in whispers upon the care of affliction, and both fortitude and philosophy are too weak to struggle against nature and affection. The husband and the friend must feel for a loss like this, nor can stoicism itself conjure their sorrows.

For love, when love and friendship, hand in hand. O'er the cold grave, attending mourners stand. The firmest heart dissolves to softness there, And sighs remain the falling tear.

On Sunday last departed this life Mr. JESSE KEY, of Albemarle county, but for some time past a resident of this city, deprived of life in the bloom of youth, he thus left his relations and friends to mourn his early departure. On Monday his remains were followed to the Church by a respectable part of the inhabitants of this city.

Lately was married at Elizabeth Town, Mr. FRANCIS GILDS, editor of the Daily Advertiser printed in the city of New York, to Miss SARAH BLANCHARD, daughter of Mr. John Blanchard, merchant, of Elizabeth Town.

ARRIVALS AT NORFOLK.

- Ship Jason, Cotte, France.
- Snow Industry, Greene, Antigua.
- Schooner George and Befey, Deagle, Baltimore.
- Sloop Polly, Vimmer, Philadelphia.
- Union, Knowles, St. Bartholomew.