

ved that a new report be ordered on the subject, to be made in ten days, which was decreed. A thick veil still seems to cloud this subject, and prevent us as yet from forming a judgment on the question. The whole commercial interest appears to wish for the repeal of this humane decree. As to the news which come daily from the colonies, they all contradict each other, and each bears the stamp of the spirit of party which dictated it. It appears, however, that there is a large majority against the adoption of the contested decree.

PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER 24.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Charleston, to his friend in this city, dated Nov. 4. "It has been observed, by several foreigners, that, considering the immense benefits which the French revolution promises to the human race, that grand event has passed in America with less elation, less sympathy of joy, than could have been reasonably expected from a people, who but seven years before, had almost by dint of mere enthusiastic bravery, emancipated themselves from the chains prepared for them by the parent state. In answer to this observation, it might be said, that the American war was of so tedious a duration, and such perpetual disappointments were the effect of their struggles, that the enthusiasm of the people naturally subsided, with the return of peace, into a cold and phlegmatic indifference. During the interval, too, from the close of the late American war to the last successful struggles of the friends of free government in France, characters were not wanting in this country who exerted such abilities as they possessed, in endeavoring to persuade the people that the principles for which they had so recently fought and bled, were nugatory—and that the right of enacting laws and governing themselves, lay not with the multitude of any nation, but with certain favorites of heaven. certain political magicians, to whom that gift was imparted (I suppose) by some supernatural means. The establishment of a free government in France, has thrown a damp upon the advocates of such doctrines. The political regeneration of twenty-five millions of men, as is the case in France, is an event that must forever abash the patrons of a baneful aristocracy in America. The pure doctrines of republicanism, and an equality of rights must and will prevail; without which man is but a reptile, and liberty but a name; and if a monarchical form of government be retained in France, it is only because the fates of that country have foreseen, that a reformation of abuses (to work a valuable effect) must always be gradual; in the same manner as the errors of the church of Rome were in times past reformed, and the authority of the Pope shaken off by the Princes of Europe, not by trampling the creed of the pontiff under foot in a sudden fit of passion, but by advancing the means of knowledge among their subjects, which has left the Holy Father an object of contempt to every body but his cardinals, the officers of the inquisition, and the devout old women of his diocese."

On Sunday evening last, as three gentlemen, of this city, were returning from Germantown, they were stopped on the road about one mile and an half from town by two robbers, armed with cutlasses, who demanded their money, clothes, and watches. Owing to some sudden alarm, however, and some hesitation in complying with their request, the fellows ran off without accomplishing their purpose.

We are informed a machine has lately been invented at New-Haven, in the state of Connecticut, to go by water, which takes wool or cotton in their raw state; and without any, or very trifling manual labor, car s, spins, and weaves to great perfection. This machine (our informant says) is so invented as to raise water from a pond or lake sufficient to keep all its parts in constant motion.

A meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Baltimore was advertised to be held on the 16th instant, in order to determine on the propriety and expediency of applying to the General Assembly of Maryland, now in session, for an act to incorporate that town.

The General Assembly of Vermont has passed a law, laying a tax of one half-penny per acre on all the lands in that state, for the purpose of raising the sum of thirty thousand dollars, to discharge the demand of the state of New-York upon them.

Accounts from the windward Islands mention a severe gale to have been felt in those parts about the 25th of October, its principal direction from the north-west to the south-west, which as being directly opposite to the uniform swell occasioned by the general eastern trade wind, soon raised the sea to such a height as to force many vessels on shore, particularly at St. Kitts, St. Eustacia, St. Thomas and St. Martins. Some of these are wholly lost, others in a way of being got off again.

A letter from the Island of Dominica, states that there are no less than four hundred slaves in that island, the property of individuals in South-Carolina, who were brought off at the evacuation. "We are much surprized (adds the letter) that no demand has been made by the general government of the United States for their delivery, as we reckon ourselves bound by the treaty of peace to restore such property."

By the brig Sally and Polly, arrived on Monday from Port-au Prince, which place she left on the 25th ult. we learn that a treaty had been concluded

between the whites and mulattoes in that part of St. Domingo; in consequence of which, 1500 persons of colour were embodied to assist in reducing the blacks.

The following address from the General Assembly of St. Domingo, was read in the House of Representatives of the United States, on Monday last.

To the Honorable the Congress of the United States.

GENTLEMEN, IN our letter of the 24th of last August, you received information of the misfortunes, which had befallen the northern part of this flourishing colony. Our whole force, though very limited, has been levelled against the ravagers, who are laying it waste; and we have to far accomplished our ends, as, if not to effect their total reduction, at least to check the evil in its progress. That unhappy catastrophe forced the General Assembly of the French part of St. Domingo to embrace every means of safety, indispensable in similar cases, and rendered necessary by the urgency of circumstances; in consequence of which, the shipping in general, and among the rest, the vessels belonging to your nation, have experienced some little delay in their departure. But, desirous of maintaining that peace and harmony, that subsist between France (of which we constitute a part) and your states—desirous also of testifying, as far as in their power, their grateful acknowledgment of the generous services, offered and rendered to the colony, by the brave subjects of the United States—the General Assembly, in concert with the King's representative, have, in the first place, set aside the Droit d'Aubaine, in favor of such as might fall victims to their own zeal and courage. The Assembly would have wished to abolish it forever, and to extend the exemption to the Americans in general; but this object being a constitutional point, they intend to apply for it to the mother country; and we have not a doubt, that she will eagerly gratify our wishes.

In the next place, having taken into consideration the obstacles, experienced by Mr. Silvanus Bourne, your consul in this colony, to the registry of his credentials—obstacles, which were occasioned by certain formal defects—the General Assembly hastened to remove them, and to give orders that the said credentials should be registered. Finally, under the constant influence of those principles of justice and equity, which cement the union between the two allied nations, and desirous of corresponding with the views of France, who will ever hold dear that memorable epoch, when the law permanent security given to the unlimited freedom of a nation, that has furnished her with the glorious example, for the recovery of her own rights to long misfunderstood—The General Assembly have, in favor of the Americans, hastened to take off the embargo, which the unfortunate situation of affairs had obliged them to lay on all vessels without distinction.

But in vain would the colony have recovered her former tranquility, if the means of applying a speedy remedy to the evil were not to be employed. The General Assembly have therefore determined to send to your body two new commissioners, Messrs. De Beauvois and Payan, who are provided with letters from the Assembly and the King's representative.

The General Assembly do not entertain a doubt, that you will, together with a favorable reception to them, give your assent to the requisitions which they are empowered to make of you, the success of which will undoubtedly extend its influence to the commerce, which the subjects of the United States carry on with this colony.

With this pleasing hope, we contemplate their departure, and direct them to the representatives of a generous nation, the friend and ally of France since the year 1783, the period when she fully recovered her liberty.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen, Your most obedient humble servant, J. PONCIGNON, President. Cape Francois, October 13, 1791.

Extract from the REGISTER of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY of French St. Domingo. [Translation.] October 10, 1791.

A petition has been presented to the Assembly by Capt. Kullichy, master of the American brig Susanna, acquainting them that "not being able to find a market for his cargo in this port, it is already in a perishing condition, and must be completely ruined, if kept longer on board. He therefore requests leave to depart from this port, or, if he must be detained, that his cargo may be purchased at the expense of the colony."

In proceeding on the petition, a member proposed a decree, that when any American captain shall not have found a sale for his cargo in this port within fifteen days after his arrival, at a reasonable price, (which price shall be fixed by the Assembly) it shall be lawful for him to leave the port, and proceed to any other in the colony he shall see fit.

A postponement of this motion was then mentioned, but the Assembly decided, that it was improper to defer the consideration of the motion. Another member proposed, that the governmental embargo should instantly be taken off all American vessels, detained under that order.

The Assembly taking into consideration, that from the calamities this island laborer, was nothing more than an act of prodigality, to them to extend the embargo, even to the inclusion of foreign vessels; yet notwithstanding this, they wish to pay all possible regard to the rights of nations, and therefore determine to continue this measure as short a time as circumstances will permit.

Considering, moreover, that the sooner the fore-mentioned vessels shall have disposed of their cargoes, the sooner they will be enabled to return to their respective countries, and bring out future supplies for the subsistence of the colony,

Decreed, That the embargo laid upon foreign vessels be immediately taken off, and that it shall be lawful for them to proceed to such ports in the colony as to them shall seem best.

The Assembly enjoins the President to acquaint the Lieutenant Governor General of the island with the above decree, for his approbation, and to notify the same to the Provincial Assemblies, provisionally appointed, of the northern, western, and southern departments, with an injunction upon the latter to make the decree known to the Municipalities and other bodies politic of their respective districts.

Done at the Sessions of the General Assembly the day, month, and year above mentioned. (Signed) PONCIGNON, President. JOUETTE, Vice-President.

Cheron, Viel, Berault, Goult, Secretaries.

[And a little lower] Signed and approved by BLANCHELANDE.

Read in the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES on Tuesday last.

The SECRETARY of STATE to whom was referred, by the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES of the United States, the petition of Jacob Isaacks, of Newport, in Rhode-Island, has examined into the truth and importance of the allegations therein set forth, and makes thereon the following REPORT.

THE petitioner sets forth, that, by various experiments, with considerable labor and expense, he has discovered a method of converting salt-water into fresh, in the proportion of 8 pints out of 10, by a process so simple that it may be performed on board of vessels at sea by the common iron cauldron with small alterations, by the same fire, and in the same time, which is used for cooking in the ship's provisions; and offers to convey to the government of the United States a faithful account of his art, or secret, to be used by or within the United States, on their giving to him a reward suitable to the importance of the discovery, and, in the opinion of government, adequate to his expenses, and the time he has devoted to the bringing it into effect.

In order to ascertain the merit of the petitioner's discovery, it becomes necessary to examine the advances already made in the art of converting salt-water into fresh.

Lord Bacon, to whom the world is indebted for the first germs of so many branches of science, had observed, that, with a heat sufficient for distillation, salt will not rise in vapour, and that salt-water distilled, is fresh. And it would seem that all mankind might have observed, that the earth is supplied with fresh-water chiefly by exhalation from the sea, which is in fact an insensible distillation effected by the heat of the sun. Yet this, though the most obvious, was not the first idea in the essays for converting salt-water into fresh. Filtration was tried in vain, and congelation could be resorted to only in the coldest regions and seasons. In all the earlier trials by distillation, some mixture was thought necessary to aid the operation by a partial precipitation of the salt, and other foreign matters contained in sea-water. Of this kind were the methods of Sir Richard Hawkins, in the 16th century, of Glauber, Haulton and Lister, in the 17th, and of Hales, Appleby, Butler, Chapman, Hoffman and Dove, in the 18th: nor was there any thing in these methods worthy notice on the present occasion, except the very simple still contrived extempore by Capt. Chapman, and made from such materials as are to be found on board every ship, great or small. This was a common pot with a wooden lid of the usual form, in the center of which a hole was bored to receive perpendicularly a short wooden tube, made with an inch and half auger, which perpendicular tube received at its top, and at an acute angle, another tube of wood also, which descended till it joined a third, of pewter, made by rolling up a dish, and passing it obliquely through a cask of cold water. With this simple machine he obtained two quarts of fresh-water an hour, and observed, that the expense of fuel would be very trifling, if the still was contrived to stand on the fire along with the ship's boiler.

In 1762, Dr. Lind proposing to make experiments of several different mixtures, first distilled rain-water, which he supposed would be the purest, and then sea-water, without any mixture, which he expected would be the least pure, in order to arrange between these two supposed extremes the degree of merit of the several ingredients he meant to try. "To his great surprize," as he confesses, the sea-water, distilled without any mixture, was as pure as the rain-water. He pursued the discovery and established the fact, that a pure and potable fresh-water may be obtained from salt-water by simple distillation without the aid of any mixture for fixing or precipitating its foreign contents. In 1767, he proposed an extempore still, which, in fact, was Chapman's, only substituting a gun-barrel instead of Chapman's pewter tube, and the hand-pump of the ship to be cut in two obliquely, and joined again at an acute angle; instead of Chapman's wooden tubes bored expressly, or, instead of the wooden lid and upright tube, he proposed a tea-kettle (without its lid or handle) to be turned bottom upwards over the mouth of the pot, by way of still-head, and a wooden tube leading from the spout to a gun-barrel, passing through a cask of water, the whole luted with equal parts of chalk and meal moistened with salt-water.

With this apparatus of a pot, tea-kettle and gun-barrel, the Dolphin, a 20 gun ship, in her voyage round the world, in 1768, from 56 gallons of sea-water, and with 6 lb. of wood and 69 lb. of charcoal, made 42 gallons of good fresh-water at the rate of 8 gallons an hour. The Doctress, in her passage from Gibraltar to Mahon, in 1769, made 19 quarts of pure water in 4 hours with 10 lb of wood: And the Stambal, in 1773, between Bombay and Bengal, with a hand pump, gun-

barrel and a pot, of 6 gallons of sea-water made 10 quarts of fresh water in 3 hours.

In 1771, Dr. Lewin, putting together Lind's idea of distilling without a mixture, Chapman's still, and Dr. Franklin's method of cooling by evaporation, obtained a premium of 5000l. from the British parliament. He wet his tube constantly with a mop instead of passing it through a cask of water: He enlarged its bore also in order to give a freer passage to the vapour, and thereby increase its quantity by lessening the resistance of pressure on the evaporating surface: this last improvement was his own, and it doubtless contributed to the success of his models: and we may suppose the enlargement of the tube to be useful to that point at which the central parts of the vapour, passing through it, would begin to escape condensation: Lord Mulgrave used his method in his voyage towards the North Pole in 1773, making from 24 to 25 gallons of fresh-water a day, without any great addition of fuel, as he says.

M. de Bougainville in his voyage round the world, used, very successfully, a still which had been contrived in 1763, by Poyssonier, so as to guard against the water being thrown over from the boiler into the pipe by the agitation of the ship. In this one singularity was, that the furnace or fire box was in the middle of the boiler, so that the water surrounded it in contact. This still, however, was expensive and occupied much room.

Such were the advances already made in the art of obtaining fresh from salt water, when Mr. Isaacks, the petitioner, suggested his discovery.

As the merit of this could be ascertained by experiment only, the Secretary of State asked the favor of Mr. Rittenhouse, President of the American Philosophical Society, of Dr. Wistar, professor of chemistry in the college of Philadelphia, and Dr. Hutchinson, professor of chemistry in the university of Pennsylvania, to be present at the experiments. Mr. Isaacks fixed the pot of a small caudron, with a tin cap and strait tube of tin passing obliquely through a cask of cold water; he made use of a mixture, the composition of which he did not explain, and from 24 pints of sea water, taken up about 3 miles out of the Capes of Delaware at flood tide, he distilled 22 pints of fresh water in 4 hours, with 20 lb. of seasoned pine, which was a little wetted by having lain in the rain.

In a 2d experiment of the 21st of March, performed in a furnace and five gallon still at the college, from 32 pints of sea water he drew 31 pints of fresh water in 7 h. 24 min. with 5 lb. of hickory which had been cut about six months. In order to decide whether Mr. Isaacks's mixture contributed in any and what degree to the success of the operation, it was thought proper to repeat his experiment under the same circumstances exactly, except the omission of the mixture. Accordingly on the next day the same quantity of sea water was put into the same still, the same furnace was used, and fuel from the same parcel. It yielded, as his had done, 31 pints of fresh water in 11 min. more of time and with 10 lb. less of wood.

On the 24th of March Mr. Isaacks performed a 3d experiment. For this, a common iron pot of 3 1/2 gallons was fixed in brick work, and the flue from the hearth wound once round the pot spirally, and then passed off up a chimney. The cap was of tin, and a strait tin tube of about two inches diameter, passing obliquely through a barrel of water, served instead of a worm. From 16 pints of sea water he drew off 15 pints of fresh water in 2 h. 55 min. with 3 lb. of dry hickory and 8 lb. of seasoned pine. This experiment was also repeated the next day, with the same apparatus and fuel from the same parcel, but without the mixture. Sixteen pints of sea water yielded in like manner 15 pints of fresh, in 1 min. more of time and with half a pound less of wood. On the whole, it was evident that Mr. Isaacks's mixture produced no advantage, either in the process or result of the distillation.

The distilled water in all these instances was found on experiment to be as pure as the best pump water of the city. Its taste indeed was not as agreeable, but it was not such as to produce any disgust. In fact, we drink in common life, in many places, and under many circumstances, and almost always at sea, a worse tasted, and probably a less wholesome water.

The obtaining fresh from saltwater, for ages was considered as an important desideratum for the use of navigators. The process for doing this by simple distillation is so efficacious, the erecting an extempore still with such utensils as are found on board of every ship is so practicable, as to authorize the assertion, that this desideratum is satisfied to a very useful degree. But though this has been done for upwards of 30 years, though its reality has been established by the actual experience of several vessels which have had recourse to it, yet neither the fact nor the process is known to the mass of seamen, to whom it would be the most useful, and for whom it was principally wanted. The Secretary of State is therefore of opinion, that since the subject has now been brought under observation, it should be made the occasion of disseminating its knowledge generally and effectually among the seafaring citizens of the United States. The following is one of the many methods which might be proposed for doing this. Let the clearance for every vessel sailing from the ports of the United States, be printed on a paper, on the back whereof shall be a printed account of the essays which have been made for obtaining fresh from salt water, mentioning shortly those which have been unsuccessful, and more fully those which have succeeded; describing the methods which have been found to answer for constructing extempore stills of such implements as are generally on board of every vessel, with a commendation, in all cases where they shall have occasion to resort to this expedient for obtaining water, to publish the result of their trial in some gazette on their return to the United States, or to communicate it for publication to the office of the Secretary of State, in order that others may, by their success, be encouraged to make similar trials, and be benefited by any improvements or new ideas which may occur to them in practice.

TH: JEFFERSON.

Philadelphia, November 21st, 1791.