

The Houma Ceres.

E. W. BLAKE, WHITE & ANDERSON.
E. W. BLAKE & CO.

INDEPENDENT IN ALL THINGS—NEUTRAL
IN NONE.

E. W. BLAKE, EDITOR.

HOUMA:

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 1855.

The editor of this paper having been called away on urgent business, has secured the services of several of his friends of Houma, to take charge of its editorial management during his absence.

Agriculture.

Dean Swift has said that he who causes two blades of grass to grow where but one grew before, is a benefactor of his species. This condensed expression of a great truth will bear the surly Deau's name and fame to the utmost posterity. Agriculture is the ultimate source of all real wealth, and man cannot more efficiently ameliorate his physical well-being than by perfecting and multiplying the arts by which the riches of the soil are developed. No branch of industry demands for its successful prosecution, more of experience, intelligence and the light of science. But tillers of the earth are prone, from the regularity and monotony of their pursuits, to fall into a certain routine of habit and sluggishness of thought. They love an easy and quiet life—they dislike change or trouble of any sort, and are therefore inclined to devote themselves exclusively to the production of a single staple whose culture they understand, whose profits they have learned; and thereby save themselves the labor and dispersion of thought which a greater variety in their modes of agriculture would necessitate. This is a great evil, as well in its effects on the soil, as in an intellectual and commercial point of view. The intelligence and tact necessarily brought into play by the complex and difficult processes of transforming the juice of the cane into sugar, will necessarily and independently of other causes, protect the planting community of Louisiana from the mental enervation which we have spoken of as the result of an unity of agricultural effort, yet the evils resulting from such a system will eventually be, in other respects, of great magnitude. Every one knows the obvious truism, that whenever the supply of any article is abundant, the price must necessarily diminish. It is equally clear that the inevitable consequence of a general production of the same article is to glut the market and thereby depress the commercial value thereof. We have seen these principles strikingly exemplified in our State. Whenever planters have made large crops, and shipped an unusual quantity of sugar and molasses, these articles have sold at the most miserable rates. The price current has, we believe, in almost every instance, disappointed the bright anticipations founded on the close packed fullness of the purgery. The almost invariable coincidence of large crops and low prices force upon us the conviction of a relationship of cause and effect between these facts. The crop of last year was small in comparison with that of the year preceding, but the prices were so much better that we believe the planters realized larger profits. In view of these facts, we think that it would redound greatly to the advantage of the planting interest if our sugar growers would cease to strive after making enormous crops of cane, and direct somewhat of their attention to the prosecution of other branches of agricultural industry. By diversifying their pursuits, they would obviate the evils flowing from an overstocked market, they would obtain greater remuneration for a less amount of their chief staple. By producing their own corn, potatoes, &c., they would save the enhanced cost resulting from the transportation of these articles from the West—they would be dispensed from the necessity of making a considerable yearly outlay of money capital which must be borrowed at a ruinous interest, and would thereby attain the incalculable advantage of having within the limits of their own plantations, another element of commercial independence. To these considerations add the pernicious effects on the character of the soil which are the inevitable results of turning all its productive energies into the growth of one

plant. The palpable evils resulting from such an exhaustive process are exhibited in the wide sterility which curses several States of the Union. A consideration of these reasons point to the necessity of a change in our planting routine, and the substitution of a diversity of agriculture to the present universality and exclusiveness of the sugar-planting mania.

We have thrown together these fragmentary reflections, less for the purpose of giving information to those whose avocations and habits of thought better qualify them for the discussion of a topic with which we are not familiar, than with a view of reviving inquiry on this and kindred subjects. Faithful to our title, and to the requirements of a country journal, we have ventured the preceding remarks, in the hope that they may elicit comment and communication from some of our enlightened planters. Mutual consultation and discussion are a source of practical information, and we would gladly give place in our columns to such communications as are of a nature to disseminate correct and useful ideas concerning the all-important business of our rich and progressive parish—the future empire parish of the State.

Refreshments.

We perceive with emotions of pride and gratification, that our little town is beginning to arouse from its midsummer inactivity. Among the cheering evidences of this revival, we have been pleased to notice several slight quarrels and street fights, which were quite stimulating, from a certain charm of novelty, to the spectators as well as to the participants. We confess that they (the fights,) did not fully realize our *beau ideal* of a regular "knock down and drag out," but still, as a beginning, they do no small credit to the taste and energy of the belligerents. We trust that others of our fellow-parishioners will emulate the laudable example, and that the noble art of pugilism will gradually assume a certain prominence among our other pursuits. The police reporters of New Orleans must not accuse us of vain boasting, in thus recording the first feeble symptoms of a bellicose ebullition in our hitherto peaceful neighborhood. Still, we flatter ourselves that at no distant day our local items will be enriched with "thrilling" narratives of more or less lively encounters. We would here suggest that the gentlemen of the parish originally from Kaintuck, shall take some early steps to introduce and naturalize, in our midst, the much neglected, but venerable science of *gouging*. Nothing but a little energy and perseverance are needed to crown the enterprise with success. Let "the work go bravely on." As it is, the progress we have made is exceedingly encouraging.

We understand that the rapid rise of the Bayou Black since the late abundant showers, will soon enable Captain John Shaffer to extricate his steamboat, the T. S. Archer, from the place where it has been stranded so long. "Shove her up."

We are led by the principle of association of ideas, to think of that ineffably abominable bridge which the parish authorities have caused to be constructed over the above-named water course, near Mr. Minor's sugar-house. If they intended to establish a parochial break-neck—an official horse-man-and-buggy trap—a convenient mode of cheapening, at the public expense, the cost of involuntary suicide—if they intended to vex, annoy and harass the traveling community, and cause all good men to sweat—they have most admirably succeeded in their Michaelvillian design. Now, we bear no ill will to the "powers that be"—they are our "most approved good masters," and we wish them no bodily harm, but, in order that they might enjoy the fruits of their labor, we do wish that all the members of the Police Jury were obliged to travel over that bridge, during low water, to attend the sessions of their honorable body. What a bridge!!

A Mander in punctuation sometimes renders "equal and exact justice" to man and womankind, when it was not exactly so intended. A blundering compositor, in setting up the toast, "Woman, without her, man would be a savage," got the comas twisted around so as to give the following, which is, we think, a decided improvement: "Woman, without her man, would be a savage."

Bad Roads.

In consequence of the recent heavy rains, the roads of the parish are bad—some of them are very bad. This condition of things should awaken the people to a sense of the great importance of having those avenues of communication properly constructed and kept in good traveling order. The neglect—the utter indifference to public opinion and public convenience, manifested in this regard by some of our respectable planters, is really shocking. Those gentlemen should reflect that their wealth and social position require that they should give evidence of a liberal public spirit—that by permitting the roads in front of their plantations to become obstacles, rather than facilities to public locomotion, they betray a flagrant lack of that genuine and practical patriotism which should characterize an American planter. Why, gentlemen! you are lords of nearly all of "God's heritage." The laws are made and enforced by the majority for your most especial protection. You derive, almost exclusively, the advantages of the social organization,—the Judges, Sheriffs, Jails, Legislatures, Gibbets, and other governmental "fixins," are instituted chiefly in your interest—the people do everything in order that you may enjoy, in quiet, your accumulated wealth—they must some day shed their blood to guard your lands and your negroes, and yet, in the face of all these palpable facts, will you do nothing for their convenience? Will you deny them what the Romans gave even to the barbarians they conquered—a good road? We merchants, lawyers, doctors, editors, &c., and the "great unwashed"—have a social claim on you, a moral as well as a legal right to a good road! We have seen roads, not a thousand miles hence, which, in rainy weather, are a very "slough of despond," where the stoutest Christian horse might have the very hoofs of him torn off. It is impossible for the Road Inspectors to notice every mud hole in the parish. Our only reliance is on the good sense and public spirit of land-holders.

It really rouses our human indignation to see a poor quadruped of a horse, struggling and floundering, knee deep in mud, along some of our flourishing plantations. But we forbear. The subject is so exciting that we are afraid, by dwelling on its various aspects, that we will become so exasperated as to grow lyrical and utter fierce *dithyrambics*.

ARRIVALS FROM LAST ISLAND.—Mr. Seelamane and family have returned from the sea-shore, and now "the wilderness will blossom as the rose."

We are happy to see that our touching appeal, of last week, had the desired effect, in bringing back from the Islands, the following gentlemen, whose absence was so much felt and regretted: Messrs. J. Aycock, F. S. Goode, Frank Gagné, and H. Newell. Now the gas works will resume active operations. All hail Terrebonne!

Mr. Jacques Rhodes, of the lower Terrebonne, having been notified by the Road Inspector to put his road in good order, peremptorily refused, alleging that he and his wife had furnished ten Rhodes to the parish, whereas the law only required him to make one. Jacques is a joker, and has a large family. The lucky dog!

The *cat-egorical* communication of our friend "Viator," is unavoidably crowded out, this week. It will appear in our next.

An impetuous Yankee, writing to one of the New York papers, in view of the improbability of the Missouri Compromise being restored, and the impracticability of all legal and peaceable modes of preventing Kansas from coming into the Union as a slave State, proposes that the whole affair be referred to a select committee of twenty thousand men, well provided with arms and ammunition.

This is a valuable suggestion; but we opine that those detestable Missourians would mar its beneficent effect by suppressing so many members of the honorable committee, that the upshot of the whole business would be a mere minority report. Some people are "half horse—half alligator," from generation to generation.

There is to be a Know Nothing Barbecue at Thibodaux to-day. The anti's are to have a demonstration of the same kind on Saturday next.

An epicurean says that Last Island is the greatest place in the world to ride, swim, drink, dance, and talk love to the ladies, but that there's nothing to eat. No vegetables—no meat—no nothing—except sempiternal and never-varying fish and oysters—oysters and fish. Mr. Chose, with his characteristic wit, says the diet is only fit for *offish-ial* personages.

FOR LAST ISLAND.—The steamer Star has begun to make regular trips between Last Island and the Grand Caillou. She leaves the Island every Friday at 6 o'clock, A. M., and arriving at the Dulac Plantation about twelve, returns the same day. The Star is commanded by the polite and obliging Capt. Stevens, to whose kindness and gentlemanly bearing, our townsmen can bear witness.

[COMMUNICATED.]
HOUMA.

It has been said of old, that "We seldom prize a good we never miss," and this saying is often verified in the streets of Houma. Some of our citizens can be heard to complain in bad weather, of the muddy streets—because they are not yet paved—some may be heard to complain of the want of a market, or of some other inconvenience common to all new places—but how rarely do our citizens descend on, or even dream of, the rare advantages, and blessings beyond all price, which they enjoy, and which are peculiar to Houma, from its local position.

It cannot fail to strike the most common observer, that the site of Houma possesses rare advantages for the growth of a flourishing town. The local position of Houma is a very commanding one. If we look at the map of the Parish of Terrebonne, we will see a number of large Bayous emptying their waters into the Gulf of Mexico, and if we trace each of these streams upwards—what is our surprise to find that they all centre at Houma.

These Bayous, viz: The Terrebonne, the Little Caillou, the Grand Caillou, the De Large, and the Black, as well as some of their tributaries, are rich, and growing richer every day, in flourishing plantations of sugar, corn, and cotton. It would occupy too much space to dwell on all the advantages Houma must derive from a position commanding such an extent of surrounding country, but to every reflecting mind, these advantages must be very apparent. When merchants of large capital shall locate here, who will be able to sell at small profits, our planters will no longer go to the expense and trouble of passing through our town, to purchase elsewhere, but a vast amount of trade and capital, with their attendant trains, will naturally concentrate at the head of these waters, and the present small, though rapidly growing, town of Houma must, from its commanding position, become a large and flourishing place.

But the local position of Houma is only one of the great advantages it possesses over most other country towns. It is, beyond all doubt, the healthiest place in the State, or perhaps in any State. While its sister villages have been scourged with all manner of epidemics—the yellow fever, the cholera, the small pox, and what not, Houma has been entirely exempt from all those terrible diseases. The sea-breeze favors its citizens daily with its delightful presence, freighted with the odors of the orange and lemon, and spreading around, in lavish profusion, the very elixir of life, and what is strange, yet true, mosquitoes are almost as rare in Houma as in St. Louis or New York.

Oysters and fish are brought here almost daily during the oyster season, and sold at the lowest prices, so that the poorest in the land may enjoy these great luxuries.

The citizens of Houma are a happy and intelligent community, and with few exceptions deserve the blessings they enjoy. A large proportion of the population are bachelors, from which circumstance, Houma is often dubbed the "Bachelor City," or "the City of the Bachelors," and a more generous, whole-souled set of good fellows never touched glasses, and it is a common remark of those who have visited the town, and become acquainted with its citizens, that Houma is always remembered with pleasant associations.

Houma, too, notwithstanding its muddy streets, &c., &c., has that mysterious power of endearing itself to its citizens, some of whom, after traveling far, and visiting rich cities and gorgeous palaces, have returned with joy to their humble homes in Houma. The ladies particularly, are strongly attached to this little village, and if you would find the way to their hearts, you will not fail to find them willing to listen to an admirer of Houma.

Before closing this article, which has already extended to a greater length than was intended, it may be remarked that Houma is a most desirable position for schools. An Academy and Female Seminary are much needed by the citizens of the parish, and the healthiness and convenience of position makes Houma a most desirable place for their location.

Houma, Aug. 6, 1855. D.

A despatch from Halifax says 500 troops are in that city awaiting conveyance to England.

The following hit it is taken from a novel entitled "Our First Families, by a descendant of the Penns." The lesson which it involves may be turned to practical account by some of our *pretendu* and *parvenu* "respectable people:

"If you were called upon to make up a delegation of the talent, learning, genius, and virtue of the country, you would no more dream of making your selection from the *soi-disant* 'aristocracy' than you would think of choosing a representative of our macerial greatness and wealth from among the men of genius and intellectual or personal distinction. Never were the two elements of material and moral superiority so widely separated as in this country. Our aristocracy, as a general fact, have not even good taste, good breeding, or good manners. They dress badly they speak badly, they eat, drink, and sleep badly. The women, for the most part, have coarse features, flat feet, and vulgar hands. They wear gaudy dresses; they talk loudly, and giggle, and affect false modesty in public; they are fond of slang, scandal, and low literature; they are rude and insolent to their inferiors, and mean and oppressive to their domestics. They always take pains to assert themselves, which a truly highbred person never does, except by the unconscious quietness of his dress appearance language and manner; and they exhaust their lives and fortunes in ridiculous attempts to outdress, outfurnish, outbuild, and outshine one another. In a word, that which passes itself off as the aristocracy of this country would be deemed only the snobbery of another. Go to Washington in winter, to Saratoga in summer, or look in at any time at a fashionable hotel or an 'exclusive' party; see the airs, the pretensions, the grimaces; listen to the subjects of conversation, and the tone of voice, the language, and the manner in which they are treated; criticise the dresses, the license of talk among the young men and women, the loud laughing the squirming and perpetual giggling, study the manners and measure the personal accomplishments of the company, and you would think that shawls, yellow plush, and Measter James had marshalled forth the hosts of high life below stairs for a grand holiday."

ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES.

A contrast.—The London Morning Advertiser, in noticing the dinner given by Mr. Peabody, the American banker on the 4th of July, remarks:

Contemplate England, groaning with taxation and struggling in a sanguinary war; with her trade deranged, her populace discontented, her government the corrupt machine of an oligarchy, and her revenues squandered for she knows not what—and contrast her with America—the American that British Cabinet Ministers treat with so much indifference, whose statesmen are cultivating the arts of peace and whose commerce is gathering a golden harvest to the nation. She it is that stands boldly forward in her civil greatness; she it is that presents a striking contrast to the military despotisms of Europe. she it is that—with her two thousand miles of unguarded coast, her unwalled cities, her meager navy—combines within herself the elements necessary to a great military nation. Peace reigns at her fireside her throne is not in mourning. Her legislators are devising means to relieve an overflowing treasury, her trade is vigorous, her people are increasing beyond comparison in wealth, her government is at least cheap and useful. Would that we could say the same! England spends her blood and treasure in fighting the battles of unthankful neighbors.—America fights only her own battles—she fights them quick and well.

CAUTION TO BOYS.—At Newburyport Mass., a few days since a son of Phineas Drew, aged fourteen years, met his death from a rush of blood to the head, caused by the very dangerous and common habit among boys, of standing on the head.

MARRIED.

At Houma, on the 8th inst., by Judge A. BOURG, Mr. JACOB COHEN, of Woodville Miss. to Miss LOUISE GUGENHEIM, of the city of New Orleans.

DIED.

Departed this life on Saturday, the 29th of July, at his plantation, "Mulberry Grove," Parish of Iberville, PHILIP WINFREE, Sen., in the 86th year of his age.

Mr. Winfree was a native of Virginia, but emigrated with his parents, during the revolution to the vicinity of the now city of Natchez, a portion of the land upon which that city now stands being then the property of his father, Jacob Winfree Mr. W. afterwards resided many years in the West Indies, but returned to Louisiana at the time of the cession by France, and now has resided in the parish of Iberville upwards of half a century. Mr. Winfree avoided public life, but frequently represented his parish in her legislative halls, and to the end of his life commanded the respect and esteem of his fellow-citizens. His pilgrimage was long and weary, but at length "he has traveled into life."
—Southern Sentinel.