NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER,

AND

WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

Vol. III. | WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. | No. CCCCXXXVIII.

Five Dolls. per ann. | FRIDAY, AUGUST, 12th, 1803. | *Paid in Advance.*

Extract from Wilson's History of the British Expedition to Egypt.

THE PYRAMIDS.

To relieve the *ennui* which the present indolent state of the army produced, and particularly as no permission was given to enter Cairo, the pyramids, distant only about four miles, had become the constant subject of occupation; and the very soldiers in going there seemed to find a recompence for many of their toils, to exult more in their triumphs, and feel the enjoyment which travellers must experience on attaining the ultimate object of their research. Their minds were aggrandized with honest pride, and honorable reflection.

The pyramids, which are consecrated from the most remote antiquity, as forming one of the seven wonders of the world, at a distance impose neither awe nor any idea of stupendous magnificence; they are situated on the immediate borders of the Desert, which elevates itself like a cliff above the cultivated country: their form, if one of the objects of their construction was to excite surprise at their grandeur and altitude, was the worst which could be conceived; but when arrived at the very base of the great pyramid, then its wonders require positive vision to credit. The mind is lost in the calculation, and the eye, unaccustomed to such masses, cannot imagine to itself such dimensions. The vastness of the granite blocks, the quantity of labor which must have been employed, the lever which must have been necessary to raise such stupendous masses of rocks, its original beauty from the various coloured marbles, porphyry and granite, with which the sides have been cased impress with equal sentiments of admiration and astonishment. When, however, reflection directs the thought to the surprising works of genius and learning of those ages in which these were constructed, and contrasts the present abject race of their posterity, the mind cannot but lament the degradation of such a portion of human nature, and consider the pyramids as monuments for melancholy instruction.

The height of the large pyramid is at least definitely ascertained by the French to be six hundred feet, the length of its base seven hundred feet. The quantity of cubic feet of solid stone is by them estimated to contain a sufficiency for the building of a wall of four hundred and fifty miles in extent, three feet in height, and five inches in thickness.—Near the top, part of the case still remains; on which are supposed to be hieroglyphics; its pinnacle is about thirty yards square, on which the French Savans once dined, and which was now constantly crowded with English. The names of Bruce,* of Algernon Sidney, Volney, and several others were carved on the stones; and it does them no small credit to have ventured as solitary travellers to the top of this gloomy pile.—The view from hence is frightfully barren; an immeasurable waste of desert is only interrupted by the narrow flat of cultivated land which separates the deserts of Libya and Arabia, nor can that arid soil, and the wretched villages in the valley, afford any scene picturesque or gratifying. The eye can only rest with any pleasure on the waters of the Nile, the island of Rhoda, and some fine orange trees in the neighbourhood of Giza. These only can refresh the aching sight; and yet this view has so fascinated, as to make Savary believe that the poets from hence must have formed their ideas of Elysium,† and so enraptured him as to excite his regrets that he could not remain during life in this garden of bliss. But Savary has proved himself a bad judge of the beautiful in country and women; his paradise placed in Europe would be deserted like a wilderness, and his houris become antiquated virgins.

"The ascent to the top is very difficult, and requires resolution & strength; each stone is at least four feet high, and the only steps are made by each superior one receding to form the pyramid, about three feet. The descent is more unpleasant, yet the soldiers went up and down, without any accident, perpetually. At the base of the north front is a door, over which are many hieroglyphics.—This, Strabo assures us, was originally half way up the pyramid, and that the drifting sand has covered the base so high. This story would be absurd to credit, if only subject to the observation that such a quantity of drifting sand must encroach on the cultivated country also, which it has not done evidently; but now the French, by digging at the four corners, have ascertained the base, and found that no such alteration has taken place, since it is erected on solid rock, and from the excavations around, there is evident proof that the bodies of the pyramids are constructed of this rock; the huge masses of porphyry and granite used to case them were brought from the neighbourhood of Cossir, on the Red Sea. By the door at the north front is the entrance into the interior of the pyramid, into the sanctum of the wonder of the world. The passage at first is very narrow and low, then afterwards enlarges. At the extremity of one branch is a well, the depth of which was never ascertained. Another passage communicates to several chambers, in the largest of which is a stone coffin, the lid is taken away, and several attempts have been made to break the sarcophagus, fortunately the hardness of the stone resisted the gothic violence. The Arabs pretend, that the corpse of a man, with his sword and some gold ornaments were found at the first opening of the coffin; but these traditions are too vague to collect any positive information from. The only certain fact seems to be, that therein reposed the corpse of that prince, for whose memory this stupendous structure was erected.

There are two other very large pyramids; one of which Murad Bey attempted to open; many stones were dug out, when the labour was found so hydreaheaded, that avarice was obliged to abandon the design, and thus this uncompleted work of destruction remains as a monument for the preservation of the rest. There are the ruins of about thirteen smaller ones, numerous catacombs in the rocks in many of which the colours of the bas relief on the walls are preserved perfectly fresh. From these circumstances, the corresponding pyramids of Sacarah, and the plain of mummies, no doubt can remain of these gigantic piles having been intended to inclose the bodies, and perpetuate the fame of the princes who hoped in such mighty characters to have their renown recorded forever, but whose ashes are dispersed like those of their meaner subjects, and of whose name history retains no trace. Ambition may hence receive instruction, and mortified pride consolation.

Sixty yards to the right of the great pyramid from the eastward front, and facing Cairo, is the celebrated Sphynx; This enormous figure is carved out of one stone, and the French have uncovered more of the form than had been for centuries: the expression of the face is feminine and nubian, but all her features have been mutilated by barbarous fanatics; the feet are not visible. She has no breasts, and the rock seems only to have been cut out so as to mark the back of a lion, which representation is said to signify that the Nile increases when the sun passes from Leo into Virgo. The height is twenty-six feet, the circumference of the head is twelve feet, the length of the back is not exactly ascertained, but from what can be seen, is probably sixty feet; the top of the head being hollowed out, favour the supposition that the priests, concealing themselves there, delivered those oracles which the miserable rabble believed to proceed from the God direct. Others have conjectured, that there was a subterraneous communication between this and the pyramids, which idea is proved to be erroneous, as the neck is found to be solid. The Sphynx certainly has been hewn out of the solid rock, on which the figure seems now to decline. The learned Mr. Bryant has therefore proved perfectly correct in his hypothesis respecting its formation.

To the north-east, in the plain of the cultivated country, and about a mile from the pyramids, are seen two bridges of Saracen architecture; for what purpose these were constructed cannot be discovered; as they afford at present no advantage of communication at any season of the year; one bridge is considerably larger than the other, and the arches of both are numerous.

About thirteen miles distant are seen the pyramids of Sacarah, which are not so large as those at Giza; under them are the celebrated mummy pits, which extend several leagues—tradition affirms as far as the great pyramids of Giza.

The operation of descending into these pits is extremely disagreeable. Bedouin Arabs are the conductors, who bring the adventurers to some holes, down which they sling themselves by a rope about thirty yards, whilst the loose stones tumbling from above inflict the severest injuries; on reaching the bottom they are shewn an opening like an oven, to get into which they are obliged to fall flat on their faces, and creep in that manner, or rather shove themselves backwards, their legs necessarily going first, for fear of suffocation, for twenty yards, over rubbish and ruins, in total darkness.

The height of the passage does not really admit of the smallest bend in the person to assist the progress; when this uncomfortable avenue is passed, the catacombs of vaults allow of a man's standing upright.

In the bird-pits millions of earthen pots lie, in the recesses of which the sacred birds of Egypt, particularly the Ibis are inclosed, and occasionally the bones of animals are found: these pots are closed by a strong cement which no air can penetrate; when broken, there drops out what is apparently a lump of burnt cinders, which proves to be the cloth in which the bodies were preserved. In almost all, the string which bound them remains perfect, and their feathers are preserved with their very shades of colour.

The mummy-pits, where human bodies are deposited, have been much ransacked by the French, at least that part which was open to their researches; still whole bodies are found even now, without penetrating far, and two or three perfect mummies have been brought to England. Indeed the Arabs, for four sequins, would always find and bring them into Cairo.

The curiosity of travellers is a considerable profit to them, and they are incessantly employed in collecting numerous little idols and broken fragments of statues and sculpture. A party of officers who had been in the pits, and shewn much anxiety in their search for mummies, were surprised whilst sitting in the Shiek's house of the village called Menf, and which is two hundred yards of the catacombs, to see during the repast they were making, some Arabs bring a basket with great eagerness. The officers naturally supposed that they were about to produce some acceptable increase of provisions, when, on laying down the basket, they were presented with the sight of four human heads, three of which retained their eyes, and each a beautiful set of teeth, three arms with hands, two legs with feet attached, one foot separate, and on all of which the nails were perfect, and sinews distinct. The Arabs had collected them with much zeal, in the anticipation of reward supposing that the English would purchase at any rate such precious antiquities; an Italian servant did give a tolerable consideration for the remains, calculating that on his return he should at least obtain for them their weight in gold.

In the wretched hovel where this singular market was established, lay on the floor a flat stone of three feet in length, and two in breadth, on which were sculptured fourteen or fifteen figures of women, apparently dancing, with a great many lines of heiroglyphics inscribed above and beneath them.

The natives could not restrain their smile of conceit on seeing the English regard a stone with such serious attention, and as a Mameluke explained, laughed heartily at some good jokes among themselves about christian ignorance.

Mr. Hammer, foreign secretary to sir Sidney Smith, a gentleman whose services are most gratefully acknowledged by that officer, and whose perfect Arabic knowledge enabled him to the most interesting researches, afterwards removed this very stone, and sent it to Vienna.

Between the Pyramids of Sacarah and of Giza is supposed to have been situated the celebrated city of Memphis, and that the plain of mummies was the burying ground. Historians have never agreed, however, as to its positive situation; but the French working in some ruins, found the hand of the colossal statue of Vulcan, which originally stood in Memphis, and which may be deemed good circumstantial evidence of the scite being about that spot. This hand was taken from the French at Alexandria, and will be lodged with the other antiquities, manuscripts, and valuable trophies from thence in the British museum, when the public may hope to receive an accurate account of the whole from col. Turner of the guards, whose learning and particular attention to this branch of science justly select him as the proper person to have charge of, and add to the collection of those valuable monuments."

* For the honor of Bruce it should be told, that every circumstance tends to corroborate his veracity. The French made many enquiries, and unite in testifying to his reputation; and many of the Abyssinians, who came with the caravans, remembered them in the country.

† Several great canals, which separated Memphis from the Pyramids of Sacarah, did furnish the Greeks with the idea of their infernal rivers, Acheron, Cocytus, and Lethe; but it required Savary's imagination to place the Elysian fields here on account of the beauty of the scenery.

FROM THE TRUE AMERICAN.

Messrs. Wilson and Blackwell,

It is with surprize equalled only by sorrow, that I behold many members of religious societies that have nothing to hope for but persecution and oppression from an union of church and state, countenancing and supporting a party which, I am well convinced, has long been, and still is, laboring to introduce into this country the corrupt government and adulterated religion of England. Their aiding this party, must, I think, be owing either to ignorance of its designs, or thoughtlessness of the consequences of its success. I have, in my own mind, no doubt of the existence of a considerable combination of rich, learned and influential men, clergy as well as laity, who wish and are striving to introduce into America the form and practice of the British government; and I believe any one who will take the trouble of examining and comparing facts, will think with me on this point.

The corruption which pure and undefiled religion sustains from a connection with the powers and concerns of this world, must be obvious to every reflecting mind; and all good men ought fervently to pray that in this country politics and religion may never be blended as they are in England.

If church and State are united, the government embraces but one sect or persuasion, and subjects all others to certain disabilities, privations, and penalties. What sect would be the favourite of government in this country, in case of an established religion, though not certainly known, may be readily guesed. In England the episcopalians are the established church and all others are called dissenters. The numerous disabilities they are subjected to, and the difficulties with which they have to struggle, (and the difficulties and disabilities would probably be the same with dissenters in America if one sect were incorporated with government) may be seen by the following piece taken from Rippon's London "*Baptist Register*," for 1793.

The civil state of dissenters in England.

"Every dissenter in England is excluded from all civil and ecclesiastical employment of honor and profit in the kingdom. No Dissenter can be admitted to command in the army or navy, were even his country invaded, nor to collect any part of the public revenue, nor to act as a magistrate, nor to graduate in either of the universities, not even to take a degree of doctor of Music or physic, which employments do not seem to have any reference to the state. Nor will the affirmation of a quaker be taken in any of our courts, in any criminal prosecution whatever; so that if a man of this denomination were to see another murder his father or his wife, he could not prosecute the criminal without denying his religion.

"No quaker can practice in any of the courts of law, not even as an attorney.

"This civil incapacity makes Dissenters be looked upon by the vulgar, most unjustly, as rebels and enemies to government, and to a family which they placed on the throne: and in all seasons of alarm and tumult, they have experienced and do experience, great evils in this way.

"Every Dissenter who acknowledges the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, is tolerated in the exercise of religious worship; but he who denies the Trinity, is, on conviction, liable to *confiscation of goods, and imprisonment.*

"Dissenters pay all taxes and tythes, and are obliged to serve offices in the church which are attended only with labour and expence, as church-warden, &c. subject to heavy penalties if they do not serve, or find, at their own expence, a proper substitute!!!"

Such is the present state of Religious Societies in England—One denomination protected, patronized, and pampered by Government—all others plundered, trampled under foot, and dispised!

How thankful ought Americans to be to HIM who in their happy country has placed all sects on an even footing, independent of and unsupported by each other, and free from the control or interference of government! And how careful ought we to be lest these peculiar and inestimable privileges should be taken from us!

Yet we see some of the Ministers and Members of those religious persuasions in this country, which in England are most dispoiled and oppressed, either assisting or countenancing ambitious and unprincipled men in their attempts to introduce an oppressive government and a corrupt religion into our country, and seconding or smiling upon their slander and abuse of *the very men* who has been the principal instrument in the hand of God in establishing religious liberty in our land!

These things ought not to be so!—Let Methodists, let Baptists, let Quakers, and others, beware lest they assist the enemies of our civil and religious rights in fixing on the necks of our children *a Yoke which neither ourselves nor our fathers were able to bear!*

A Friend to Religious, as well as Civil Liberty.

FROM A LATE LONDON PAPER.

LORD LYTTLETON's VISION.

The remarkable circumstances attendant on the death of Lord Lyttleton having been so variously represented, a statement of the realities may afford the public some degree of satisfaction, and tend to prove that the intervention of that Divine Providence which governs the Universe is not inconsistent with reason or truth. The authenticity of the narrative may be depended upon.

There was a gentleman of much respectability, who had a residence at Clent, near Hagley-Park, the seat of Lord Lyttleton. The family consisted of himself, wife, son, and four daughters; the eldest married, the others living with their parents at home. In June 1778 the gentleman died. Previous to which time Lord Lyttleton was in the habit of visiting the family, but now appeared desirous of greater intimacy; to accomplish which he repeated his visits in the autumn, and made the young ladies a present of some elegant paraphernalia on new year's day, 1779, with a letter subjoined, written in the phraseology of Scripture (of which the following is a copy), probably with a view to ingratiate himself with the mother, who was a lady of exalted understanding and great dignity of manners:

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF ST. THOMAS TO THE GLENTILES.

1. Behold, I will speak to the daughters of Glent in the language of wisdom, and give you understanding to guide you in the paths of peace.

2. Look not, Eliza, upon man, nor upon the sons of men, with an eye of concupiscence, saying, "am I not sported?" for verily the wicked will be aware of the intentions of thy heart.

3. Take heed to thy ways, lest thou be like the foolish woman, even like Mary,* who will repent, even as Magdalene repented.

4. Did she not turn away fom her mother, even the mother that brought her forth, to seek out new inventions?

5. But be thou steady, like the cedar of Mount Lebanon, that taketh its root in the earth, and lifteth its tall head to the skies.

6. As for thee, O Christiana, remember by whom thou art called, and seek not thy cloak in the dark.†

7. Trust not to thy cunning, for that which appears to thee wisdom, is but folly to the wise.

8. Go to, thou art brown, but pleasant to look upon; and thy ways are full of sweetness.

9. Thine eye is like the eye of the basilisk, and it burneth like the red star in the tail of the sagitary.

10. Thou dost excel all the daughters in the works of the needle, and thy voice is sweet to the ear.

11. When thou singest, thy voice is like the voice of the nightingale, when she mourneth for her mate by the river of Ziola, in the shady groves of Jehosaphat.

12. Thy mother putteth her trust in thee, be thou a comfort unto her when her heart is sad, that she may boast of thee, and say, "I am the mother of Christiana."

13. As for thee, O Margaret, thou rose-bud of sweetness, peace be unto thee.

* The married sister, who had acted imprudently.

† The circumstance of the Cloak refers to a reply that Miss Christiana made when interrogated respecting her absence, viz. that she was looking for her Cloak.