

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

VOL. XXVIII.

NEW-YORK, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1825.

NO 48, PINE-STREET

Chili which lies between the Andes and the Pacific Ocean, and between the 36th and 39th degree of south latitude.

There are several other valuable articles in this number. We particularize the continuation of the essay on the First Settlement of our Country, which is characterized by a freedom of thought and expression, which has long been a desideratum in our periodical journals of literature. The writer presents the leading features of the colonies of Massachusetts and Virginia in a bold contrast, but its justice will be acknowledged by every one familiar with the records of their respective histories.

The People, vs. David Baker.—The two indictments in this cause were tried in the Court of Oyer and Terminer on Tuesday and Wednesday, (yesterday,) and a verdict found for the Defendant. We have a report of the trial prepared, for which we cannot find room till tomorrow.

Forgery.—Just as our paper was going to press, we received the following letter from the Colombian Consul in this city:—

NEW-YORK, Dec. 29, 1825.

Gentlemen—The proclamation which appeared in your paper of yesterday, as issued by the President of Colombia, is a poor forgery, made perhaps at Pernambuco with some political or commercial object. The forger of it, is an ignorant of geography, as he is unacquainted with the political principles and sacred laws which lead the sword of the Liberator of Colombia.

I hope you will say something on the subject, or publish, if you think proper, this communication. Respectfully sir, your obedient servant,
XAVIER DEL MEDINA.

Longevity.—There are now living in the town of Middletown, Con. seven members of a family, consisting of one brother and six sisters, whose united ages amount to 559 years.—The eldest is 90—the 2d, 86—the 3d 84—the 4th, 80—the 5th 78—the 6th, 73—the 7th, 68 years of age.

It is stated in the Lancaster Journal that the Conestoga Navigation Company, have entered into a contract with Mr. Caleb Hamil, to make a steam boat navigation from the city of Lancaster to the Susquehanna river, a distance of 18 miles, for \$53,240. The work to be completed by the 4th of July, 1827. There are to be nine dams and nine locks, averaging about 7 feet lift each. Mr. Hamil contracted for the delivery of the necessary timber in the spring, and has now a number of hands employed upon the work.

The brig Caspian, Capt. Cook, at Salem, from Calcutta, spoke on the 13th Nov. lat 60 50, S. lon. 27 30, W. the Brazilian line of battle ship Pedro-Primo, of 74 guns, Com. D. Jewett, and was treated politely. She was from Ceara, with 1500 persons (passengers) on board, except ship's company. Com. Jewett informed us there was a famine at Ceara, and the inhabitants were dying in great numbers in the province.

FOR THE COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

Messrs. Editors,

As you have, in your paper of yesterday, availed yourself of your editorial privilege, to plead in behalf of the religious observance of Christmas, and undertaken, moreover, to "condemn the error" of the Puritans in refusing to observe this festival themselves, (for in no other sense, that I know of did they ever "prohibit" the observance of it*), will you allow a subscriber to your paper, and one of the descendants of those venerable men, to say a word in their vindication? No controversy on this subject is intended; and if I know how to pen these few lines in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of any further discussion, I should be glad to do it. I assure you, sir, it makes no part of my present plan to "condemn," or even to find the least fault with, those who think it their duty to observe Christmas, and other holydays. "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind." I venerate and love many who are of that opinion, though I cannot think with them. But you, surely, will not deny me the privilege of saying a word, the only object of which is to alleviate, if not to avert, the sentence which you have passed against a body of men "of whom the world was not worthy," and whose example I wish many were as willing to follow as to praise.

The "Pilgrims," then, for themselves only, refused to observe Christmas, and other holy days, for the following reasons.

I. They thought that no warrant for any such observance was to be found in Scripture. They believed that every institution of this nature, pertaining to the Old Testament economy, was abolished at the coming of Christ; that no similar days were appointed in their place; that neither the Saviour nor his inspired Apostles gave the least countenance, either by precept or example, to the sanctification of any other day than the Sabbath.

II. They considered the BIBLE as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. They denied that the Church, or any member of it had a right to institute new rites or ceremonies. They were persuaded that the Lord Jesus Christ alone was the Supreme Head and King of the Church; and had no doubt that He, and those Apostles whom He inspired by his own Spirit, were as competent judges of what was proper, and for the edification of the Church, as any individual or body of individuals have been since; and, of course, that for uninspired, and therefore fallible men, to undertake to add to the number of Christ's appointments, is a measure, to say the least, of very questionable propriety.

III. They were confident that, for a long time after the death of the Apostles, no stated festival or Fast Days whatever were observed in the Church. Justin Martyr, who wrote a little after the middle of the second century, and who gives a particular account of the institutions and habits of the Christians, gives no hint of any day being kept holy, excepting the first day of the week, or the Christian Sabbath. Before the time of Origen, who flourished about the middle of the third century, the Christians, had introduced several holy-days, partly to gratify the converts from Paganism; who, on coming into the Church, wished to have some substitute for the Pagan festivals which they had abandoned. But even at this time, the observance of Christmas was unknown.—Origen gives a list of the holy-days observed at the time in which he wrote; but says nothing about a festival for Christ's nativity; from which Lord Chancellor King, in his "inquiry into the Primitive Church within the first three hundred years after Christ," confidently infers that no such festival was observed till after the time of Origen. Indeed the Christians during the first three centuries, differed so widely concerning the month and day of the Saviour's birth; some placing it in April, others in May, &c. that there is an utter improbability, on this ground alone, that they commemorated the event by an ecclesiastical festival.

IV. The Puritans attached no little importance to another consideration. Supposing, (what they could not admit) that the church possesses the power to institute observances, which Christ and his Apostles never knew: supposing that teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," or in other words, adopting "human inventions in the worship of God," could be justified; what limit they asked, could be set to this power? How far may it be carried? When the door to uncommanded observances is once opened, by whom or when will it be effectually closed? You, and a few others, Mr. Editor, might think two or three well-adjusted church

festivals, besides fifty-two Sundays in the year, quite sufficient. The Protestant Episcopal Church, however, in this country, has appointed about thirty stated festivals, besides a still larger number of Fast-days. The Church of England has a greater number, it is believed, both of fasts and festivals. The Church of Rome, from whom the Church of England selected her list, observes a far greater number than either. In favor of every one of these days, serious, respectable men have something very plausible to say; and have actually uttered very contemptuous, and even indignant things against plain, simple-minded Protestants, who could not easily swallow such a mass of superstition. Is it any wonder, then, that the Puritans, perceiving the tendency in all churches to go to extremes in multiplying such observances, whenever they began to be introduced; and knowing that there was no way to prevent this, but by shutting them out altogether: deliberately preferred the latter as the safer course?—and, truly, if there be no Bible warrant for festivals;—no solid warrant for them in the practice of the Christian Church for the first 300 years, and, above all, none for Christmas; if the whole business of bringing institutions into the Church for which there is no Divine authority, be unlawful and of dangerous tendency; and if, whenever the practice has been admitted, it has been almost always abused, that is, carried much further than it ought to have been, I cannot help thinking that the Puritans had at least plausible, if not conclusive, reasons for taking the course which they did.

I must again protest, Mr. Editor, that I have no desire to shake the faith, or alter the practice, of those who differ from the Puritans on this subject. But I could not, for my life, help doubting, whether, when you "condemned" those venerable men, as in "error" as to this point, you were really acquainted with ALL the reasons which led to their decision. I make a much more favourable estimate than is correct, both of your intelligence and candour, if you do not think the few of their reasons which have been stated worthy of some regard. Yours,
BIBLICUS.

* The respected author of this communication, here labors under an error, as will be seen by the following quotation from the Essay on "the first settlement of our Country," in the last number of the Boston Monthly Magazine. "In Massachusetts, any thing which belonged to the Episcopal Church was treated as anti-christian, and carried the mark of the beast. CHRISTMAS HOLYDAYS WERE PROHIBITED BY LAW." * * * "While a law imposing five shillings, fine for observing a Christmas holiday in Massachusetts was in force, Virginia gave full scope to all the festivities usual on such occasions in the mother country. The social and convivial feelings of men, could not, with alacrity, forego all pastime, and be resigned to abject sobriety in the form of religion. Our ancestors well knew this, and set apart one day in the year, previous to Christmas, as a day of public thanksgiving and praise to our Heavenly Father, for the mercies and favors of the past year. But in this there should be no resemblance of an Episcopal Christmas."—Com. Adv.

FOR THE COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

Messrs. Editors,

A word if you please in reference to your remarks upon the project of Miss Wright. You ask what it will all amount to, or what use are these isolated, individual exertions, so long as more than a thousand are annually born into slavery, for every one that is manumitted and colonized. I will answer you, by saying, it leads the people to see the work they have to perform, and teaches them that the nation must do it—it has led you to remark on the subject. Your readers will see that Miss Wright deserves the aid of all. I will ask too, what availed the isolated and disunited efforts of our Fathers to bring on the Revolution.

What method do you editors take, and others, when they wish the people to perform any work? Is it not to arrest their attention; do you not bring the subject before them; do you not show that it is feasible and desirable; and is not this the course which is indispensable for our government to take, because the people are Sovereign. And gentlemen I will inform you that this has been and is the design of every effort which has related to the emancipation of the slaves, to shew it could be done if the people shall please. This is the fact, although most of the editors of our papers have not, or will not see it. Why will you not, gentlemen, take up the subject, and urge it on the people; rather than insinuate difficulties to promote a continuance of a silence that has too long reigned? Your pen cannot touch one so important. L.

A visit to the Cock Pit—Some time ago, our police put an end to cock fighting in the Liberty street pit, which, by the bye, was erected in a garret. These occasional interferences of the police, though somewhat vexatious, have not, it seems, damped the ardour or affected the taste of the cognoscenti who, it seems, built a very handsome pit in the Bowery. The ring was neatly ornamented, and filled with a fine hard smooth substance: seats in an amphitheatre form, cushioned, were raised in numbers calculated to accommodate a large audience. The usual fashionable precaution of door keepers, ivory tickets, horse tails towards the tea water pump, &c. &c. were adopted, but the police respecting none of those unchartered privileges, went in force on Saturday evening, and took up ten or eleven gentlemen, managers, &c. In the garret were nearly thirty tea chests, each curiously arranged and containing a bantam fowl, well fed and furnished. These were put into a bag, and with the fancy gallanted to the watch house, but the crowing defiance of the gallant birds during the night, awoke the watchmen who had been relieved, and they rose from their bunks and very fairly cut off the heads of the cocks, leaving their trunks for a breakfast—bonne bouche.

The gentlemen, at the usual hour, gave bail and were discharged, but about noon, a countryman walked solemnly into the Police, and stalked up to the bench, on which was the magistrate for the day: "Mout your name be Mr. Ovatson?" "Ovat is my name, Sir." "Pray Sir, did you take up a number of Cocks last night?" "Yes Sir, and some Cock-fighters also." "Where mout the birds be?" "They are dead." "Dead! the devil." "Don't swear neighbor, we fine every man for swearing." "Well, I wont Sir, but it's a d—d hard case, ten of those Cocks were mine, Sir; I sent them from the country to board at that place, and I paid 7 shillings a piece a week for their board." "Mercy on me, seven shillings a week? Why you, yourself, can board for that sum." "I knows it, Sir, but my birds were more valuable ner I, they were your real things, full of fight; I physicked 'em myself." "What? physicked the Cocks?" "Yes Sir, doctored 'em, gave each of 'em a half grain of mercury, and puked 'em occasionally, and fed 'em on corn and little water, so that they got to be bony and sinewy, and were full of wigor, and would fight any thing; you see my hand, Sir, all pecked and scratched; I only held up my fist to little Bonypart, and he fly'd at me like a tiger." "Well, I am sorry, friend, that in these unlawful games, you have lost your property." "No I hant Sir, I'll sue the landlord, that I will; I wouldnt take ten dollars a piece for the birds, so I'll summon him, so I will; he is answerable for my fowls." So saying, he bristled out of the Police with wrathful expedition.—N. Y. Nat. Adv.

Another.—Yesterday morning, about eight o'clock from the Second street road, three and a half miles from the city, a young gentleman, who is sickly and who rides every day for his health, was dragged from his horse by a man with a masque on and was robbed of a silver watch.—The watch was cased on the back with ornaments, in the centre of which were the letters K. T. The young man was not personally injured and was suffered to remount the moment he gave up the watch. The robber had no other weapon but a walking cane, which he