perty to the strong holds and fastnesses in the interior, having previously burnt the towns.

We learn with pleasure that no fears can arise with respect to any danger to our possessions in the West Indies, should the new government of St. Domingo prove hostile to us. The blacks are destitute of vessels capable either of annoying our trade, or of transporting troops, and we decidedly question the policy of any commercial treaty with them, which would not only expose the lives and property of our merchants, but involve us in a connection that might interfere in our future arrangements with France, and hold up an example to our own colonies ultimately productive of the most dangerous consequences.

COURT OF KING's BENCH.

LONDON, May 26.

PLUNKETT,

viz.

COBBITT.

This was an action brought by the plaintiff, who is Solicitor General in Ireland, against Mr. Cobbett for an alledged libel published in the Weekly Political Register, of the 10th of December last. The damages were laid to the amount of 10,000l. The libellous passages were contained in a letter, signed "Cambricus," and were as follows:—

"If Dr. Addington had required that Lord Kenyon should direct a Cambridgeshire Earl in all his councils, the integrity of his Lordship would have shrunk from such an undertaking, particularly if a condition had been added to it, that a couble of lawyers, without political habits, political information, or honorable connexions, were to be joined as assessors, and to be the only assessors; on the contrary, his pride and integrity would have both joined in preventing such men from being introduced into the Cabinet. If any one man could be found, of whom a young but unhappy victim of the justly offended laws of his country, had, in the moment of his conviction and sentence, uttered the following apostrophe.—'That Viper, whom my father nourished! He it was from whose principles and doctrines which now by their effects drag me to my grave; and he it is who is now brought forward as my prosecutor, and who, by an unheard of exercise of prerogative, has wantonly lashed with a speech to evidence the dying son of his former friend, when that dying son had produced no evidence, had made no defence; but, on the contrary, had acknowledged the charge, and submitted to his fate; Lord Kenyon would have turned with horror from such a scene, in which, although guilt was to be punished, in the whole drama justice was confounded, humanity outraged, and loyalty insulted."—Again, "that Lord Kenyon would have shrunk from recommending to his Majesty's Councils a man who had insisted upon the sovereignty of the people as a FIRST principle."

Mr. Erskine, in a speech of great learning and eloquence, addressed the Jury.—He expressed his veneration for the rights of free discussion, and the liberty of the press; they were the birth rights of Englishmen, he said, and should never be departed from. At the same time, it was never intended these sacred principles should be confounded, and the first elements of British liberty be made a shield to protect the unprincipled libellor. The law, as regarded libels, was clear and explicit, and it was laid down "that if a man writes or publishes that which injures or brings into contempt his neighbour, or shall endeavor to shew that an individual is unfit for the office he holds, whereby that individual may be displaced and injured, such man shall be deemed a libeller."—To that my Lord Holt, whose attachment to the liberty of the press could not be doubted had added, "that injurious words spoken of a public character were more prejudicial than if uttered against an individual in a private station."—The inquiry then would be, whether the defendant wrote or published the words, and what was his meaning when he wrote them? That the libel was of a malignant, injurious and destructive nature, there could be no doubt, and when it was considered that it was written immediately after the murder of Lord Kilwarden, it must be perceived that it struck not only at the honor of Mr. Plunkett, but in its consequences might expose his person to similar outrage. The learned Counsel then alluded to the trial of Mr. Robert Emmett, whose fate he said every one must lament, however his conduct might be condemned. He had filled his mind with a fatal enthusiasm, that Ireland could only be happy in a separation from England; and, so falsely possessed was he of its truth, that after his condemnation he entered into an eulogium upon the rebellion, and defended its necessity and continuance: yet, after this mistaken and ill-judged exultation, [said Mr. Erskine] he declared that such was the mildness and moderation and wisdom of Lord Hardwick's administration, that he was obliged to push on the catastrophe, and bring out his associates undisciplined, lest his extended and deep laid rebellion should cease, from the causes that urged it being daily removed, and gradually dissolving away. Mr. Erskine further complimented Lord Hardwick's government, who, he said, appeared to be pefectly convinced of the necessity of governing that brave people with a light and delicate hand, and seemed to have adopted the principle of the great Earl of Chatham, who speaking of America, said—

"Be to her virtues ever kind;
"Be to her faults a little blind;
"Let all her ways be unconfin'd;
"Clap not a padlock on her mind."

The learned counsel returned to the subject of Mr. Emmett's trial, and observed, that so far from Mr. Plunket having lashed the unfortunate man in his speech to the evidence, that he had wholly employed his address in reading a useful lesson to the misguided part of his Majesty's subjects:—assuring those who expected happiness from French assistance and French principles, that they would be miserably abused; that the leading feature of the French government was ambition, and every thing that was the reverse of Washington, and contrary to all they anticipated.—At that moment, said Mr. Erskine, the applying the axe to the neck of Mr. Emmett was nothing: the public example every thing. The defendant, he said, had not merely thrown out the *ambiguas voces*; but day after day had been writing and sending forth his libels among the community. It was no defence to say, that Mr. Cobbett was an admirer of his king and constitution, if he was constantly libelling the ministers of that king, and transgressing the laws of that constitution. It was nothing for him to say, "I respect my religion and my God," if he broke the ten commandments daily. The Saviour of man said, "by their fruits shall ye know them," and the court would judge of Mr. Cobbett by his works. He next entered upon an explanation of the libels, and urged, that it was impossible their allusion should be misrepresented, or their libellous intention mistaken; concluding this branch of his argument by saying, that the defendant might be a man with a strong and vigorous mind, and that the talents of such a man could not be controuled; yet he should take care, in the exercise of that mind and talent, not to slander another's reputation by the wicked efforts of his superior genius. The more esteemed the man for learning, the more his productions were admired. The powerful mind, whether it gave vent to its acquirements upon the canvas as a painter; in the tented field as a general; in the Senate House as an orator; or upon paper as a writer, the effect was the same. The man who reads, said Mr. Erskine, falls into the track and opinions of him who writes, and the more powerful the writer, the more powerful the influence. In proportion, then, to the defendant's talent, the extent of injury was to be considered and the compensation measured.—He next commented on that part of the libel which described his Majesty as having struck out of his list of Privy Counsellors an illustrious nobleman, for having toasted the sovereignty of the people at a "drunken club," and further urging the impropriety of "introducing into his Majesty's Council, a man, (meaning Mr. Plunkett) who, the writer inferred, had insisted, in a grave assembly of legislators, that the sovereignty of the people was a *first* principle in the state." The learned council, in touching this part of the subject, ludicrously described Mr. Cobbett as a *grape and canister-shot libeller*, wounding and injuring characters in all directions. Mr. Erskine concluded a speech of two hours in length, by observing, that the question the Jury had to consider, was, whether the libel was written or published by the defendant, and if so, whether it was written for the purpose, and with the intention ascribed to it; and if they were of that opinion, they were bound to give a verdict of damages commensurate with the injury, and such as would furnish a wholesome lesson to the defendant for his future conduct in life.

Evidence was then produced, that Mr. Cobbett was the sole proprietor of the Political Register. Several witnesses were then called in order to explain the inuendoes; these witnesses were Mr. Wickham, Mr. Barnett, and Mr. Foster, Speaker of the late Irish House of Commons. These gentlemen, on being shewn the libels, agreed in thinking the inuendoes applied to Mr. Plunkett.

Mr. Adam then rose and addressed the Court and Jury for the defendant. He began by stating, that there were several particulars in the speech of his learned friend, of which it was his duty to complain. His learned friend had made very free allusions to the proceedings which had taken place on the former day, and it appeared, his principal efforts were directed so as to keep that day fresh in the minds of the jury. The anxiety which he (Mr. A.) felt on that occasion, he trusted, would not injure him in the esteem of the jury, or hurt in the most remote degree the cause of his client. He knew that justice would be done, not as Mr. Erskine said, he knew the persons of the jury, but because he gloried in, and well knew the character of an English jury. His learned friend had endeavoured to inflame their minds, by adverting to the state of Ireland; but that was not the question, and did not bear at all on the present action. The question was, whether they would try this action with free and unfettered minds, divested of those prejudices which had been brought into view. Mr. Erskine had held Mr. Cobbet very high as a public character, and had introduced the evidence of the other day, in order to enhance the damages; he trusted the jury would not attend to any such considerations. Mr. Cobbet was a man of perseverance, he lived an upright life, was the father of a numerous family, and the husband of an amiable wife. He gained his living, not by ribaldry in his writings, they were characterized by an honest zeal in favor of the aristocratical institutions of the country. He had been the assertor of the rights of his country in America, but he had not realised the means of paying damages to the enormous amount now demanded. If a verdict to that amount should be given against him, he would be doomed to an eternal jail; and it was contrary to law, that a man subjected to damages, should be made to endure a corporal punishment. After a great many arguments on the construction of the libels, the learned counsel concluded by entreating the jury to be lenient in their verdict.

Lord Ellenborough briefly addressed the jury, who retired for a few minutes, and returned with a verdict in favor of the plaintiff.—Damages 500l.

WASHINGTON CITY.

MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 1804.

We learn that Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Priestley of Northumberland in Pennsylvania, are engaged in writing the biography of Dr. Priestley. Among the papers left by the Doctor is an account of his own life for a number of years, as well as we recollect, about seventeen. This is likely to be a precious literary relic. From the unaffected modesty which invariably characterised the doctor, and from the ingenuousness of his mind and his ardent love of truth, we may expect a faithful record of his thoughts. Among the most agreeable legacies of this nature left by eminent literary characters, our readers will recollect the interesting narratives of Franklin, Hume and Gibbon. The plain and unadorned statements they have made, have given us a more correct insight into their characters, and have more successfully contributed to shield their fame from unjust aspersion, than all the eulogiums pronounced by their admirers. We may be permitted to indulge the hope that the artless narratives of a Priestley, who united to the consciousness of talent felt by a great mind the simplicity inspired by true genius, will form the best monument to the purity of his motives, and to the beneficence of a spirit actively occupied through a long life in the service of his fellow men.

On the 10th inst the general election was held in *North Carolina.*

Messrs. Macon and Stanford appear, from the North Carolina papers, to have been re-elected without opposition.

The same papers state the re-election of Mr. Alston as beyond doubt from the votes already ascertained—and that Thomas Blount will likewise be elected.

The executive of Virginia (in the recess of the Legislature) have appointed *William B. Giles* and *Andrew Moore*, Senators in the Congress of the United States, the former to supply the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Abraham Venable, and the latter to supply the vacancy occasioned by Wilson C. Nicholas.

The Circuit court of the district of Columbia, for the county of Washington adjourned on Thursday last until the third Monday in September next, when the remainder of the criminal and equity business is expected to be done. At this term the following gentlemen were admitted and sworn attornies and counsellors of the court.

Charles Evans, Thomas Holland Wilkinson, James Hercules Kearney, & Samuel Smith Hamilton, Esquires.

The grand Jury of Inquest for the city and county of New York, now in session, have found a bill of indictment against the Vice President of the United States for sending a challenge to Gen. Hamilton, inviting him to be killed in a duel; and against William P. Van Ness and Nathaniel Pendleton, for acting as seconds. Should this indictment be confirmed by the competent authority, the parties will be disfranchised for the term of 20 years, pursuant to a law passed by the legislature of this state at the last session. *N. Y. paper.*

Charleston, August 3.

Died, at his house in this city, on Sunday last, *John Neufville*, esq. commissioner of the Continental Loan office of this state. He was seized on the 27th June last, with some semblance of palsy. By importunity he consented to the physician's aid; on the 29th doctor Ramsay was called; but he soon rejected medicine, and it was with difficulty he could be prevailed on to take nourishment. Fever ensued, and the case became arduous; for no preparation of bark could be administered, and his advanced age, embittered complaints and helpless state, precluded the thought of tormenting him with blisters—Having by an unfortunate fall, broke one of his hip bones in August, 1801, a distressing wound was the consequence of being able to lay upon only one side. His speech failed the three last days—all human assiduities to save a valuable life were unavailing, and he expired without a groan and scarcely a sigh—He raised and educated a large family.—His love of freedom and the rights of mankind, made him a zealous and active advocate in our revolutionary struggles. Being of the privy council and a member of the existing committees, the success of our cause animated and engrossed his mind. He embarked his fortune, which was very considerable and lost it all. A grievous imprisonment, exile and sufferings, he shared with his brave compatriots, and with them the issue of the contest and restoration to his native home gladdened his virtuous poverty.

Unsolicited and unthought of, he received from General Washington the Commission of Loans; his fellow citizens well knew with what integrity he conducted himself in office, as well as in his private walk of life. On the day he was arrested by the messenger of death, he conversed a little with Brigadier General Washington on official business; and until that period, notwithstanding lameness prevented his walking, or being moved but in a chair with rollers, he attended to his duty. He had an excellent constitution, preserved by temperance, was 45 years without taking a dose of physic, and rarely seen on a sick bed. His age was 76 years and 9 months. The late Presidential election greatly agitated his mind, as he was fearful if the general voice of the people did not prevail, his country would have been involved in the calamities of civil contention; but the happy result restored the calm and wonted equipoise. He died contented.

NEW-YORK, *August 14.*

Capt. Ely, who arrived here last evening from Amsterdam, informs, that admiral Verheul, commander of the united Batavian and French flotilla, sailed from Flushing about the beginning of June with a squadron of about 60 gun boats, some brigs and schooners for Ostend—that on his way, he fell in with a division of British ships, late under command of sir Sidney Smith; and after a severe engagement beat them off and got safe into Ostend with the loss of only three boats, after which Admiral V. returned to Flushing, where he received 2 swords mounted with gold and many handsome compliments for his bravery. The Emperor promoted him to the rank of Vice-Admiral, &c. The British lost a cutter, and one of their frigates two of her masts.

Captain Ely further informs, that the Dutch would not suffer any American vessels to enter New Dieppe; but it was supposed this prohibition would soon be removed.

We have received Dutch papers to the 23d June, but they are barren of news. One of which, however mentions, that Talleyrand was appointed Arch-Chancellor of France.

PARIS, June 7.

Copy of a letter from gen Moreau to the Grand Judge, Minister of Justice, enclosing his letter to the First Consul.

"*Citizen Minister,*

"I send you herewith annexed, a letter for the First Consul. I beg you, when you transmit it to him, to engage him to read it with the greatest attention. I make no doubt but he will appreciate the situation in which I am placed, and hasten to pronounce on my fate.

"I beg you, citizen minister, to accept the assurance of the most distinguished consideration, with which I am,

(Signed) "The General, MOREAU."

The Grand Judge's Reply.

"This evening at 11 o'clock, citizen gen. Moreau, I laid your letter of this day before the First Consul. His heart was affected in a lively manner by the rigorous measures which the safety of the state have prescribed him.

"At your first interrogatory, when the conspiracy and your being implicated therein, were not denounced to the first authorities and to all France, he had charged me, if you had shewn a wish to that effect to bring you before him that very moment, that you might have contributed to draw the state out of the danger in which it still continued.

"Before I let justice take its course, I would by a second interrogatory, assure myself if there were no possibility to separate your name from this odious affair. You have not given me any opportunity to do so.

"Now that the juridical proceedings are begun, the law requires, that no paper, whether for or against you, should be withdrawn from the judges, and the government has ordered me to annex your letter to the proceedings.

(Signed) "REGNIER."

NOTICE.

The Commissioners for building a Wharf in this city agreeable to a late law of the corporation shall want for the execution of that work, about 10 or 1200 feet of wharf logs, and about 140 perches of stone, to be delivered in the Tyber on the spot fixed on for the wharf—Proposals for furnishing the above materials, as also for the filling in of said wharf and for the workmanship of the frame and walls thereof will be received by either of the subscribers between this and Monday evening next, when they will meet on the business at Mr. L. Moris's.

The subscribers for the promotion of the above work are requested to pay the amount of their respective subscriptions to either of the subscribers to this notification (who are authorised to receive it) as soon as possible.

Timothy Caldwell,
David Shoemaker,
Peter Lenox, } Commissioners.
Lewis Morin,
John P. Van Ness,

August 17—at

At a meeting of a number

of citizens convened at the West Market on Saturday the 11th inst. for the purpose of organising themselves into a Fire Company, pursuant to an act of the City Council passed the 24th ult Mr. Joseph Stretch was appointed chairman of the meeting and Thomas H. Gillis secretary: whereupon it was

Resolved, That a committee of Three be appointed to draft a set of rules and regulations for the government of a Fire Company, and that they report the same at the next meeting.

Resolved, That Joseph Stretch, John Woodside and Thomas H. Gillis be a committee for the above purpose.

Resolved, That the citizens resident west of 16th street west, be requested to attend at the west Market on Saturday the 18th inst at 6 o'clock P. M. and that they have notice thereof in the National Intelligencer.

Joseph Stretch, Chairman,
T. H. Gilliss, Secretary.

FIRE COMPANIES.

The citizens of the 1st ward, comprising all that part of the city lying west of 16th street west, are earnestly requested to attend at the West Market, on next Saturday the 18th inst at 6 o'clock P. M. for the purpose of receiving and acting upon the report of the committee appointed at the last meeting "to draft a set of rules and regulations for the government of a Fire Company." The importance and necessity of establishing Fire Companies, it is to be hoped will insure a general and punctual attendance.

T. H. GILLIS, Director of the First Ward.

Washington City, Aug. 17—

MEDITERRANEAN PASSPORTS.

Notice is hereby given, that it has been deemed expedient to change the form of the Mediterranean Passport issued to vessels of the United States, that from the eighth day of July next those of the new form will be issued at the custom houses to every vessel, for which application may be made on a compliance with the terms prescribed by law and surrendering the former passport of which she may be possessed, if any, in which latter case no fees will be required for the exchange; and that by an arrangement agreed upon by the Barbary powers, with whom we are at peace, either the old or the new form of passport will be sufficient to protect the vessels of the United States, from capture until the 1st of July 1805, after which the old form of passport will be unavailable and the new one alone in use.

Department of State, }
23d of May, 1804. }

The printers of the laws of the United States are requested to insert the above in their Gazettes twice a week for the space of six months, and the Collectors of the Customs to keep copies of it posted up in their offices.

May 30—2aw6m