

COLONIAL.

AWFUL AND DESTRUCTIVE HURRICANE AT BARBADOES.

We lay before our readers, says the New York Evening Post, a letter from the Consulate of the U. States at Martinique, just received by the Collector of this port accompanied by a Gazette extraordinary, issued from the Barbados Mercury office; bearing date August 13, giving an account of the ravages of one of the most terrible hurricanes of which we remember to have heard. It passed over the ill-fated Island of Barbados on the night of the 10th inst. and in eight hours left it desolate—covered with ruins and dead bodies. A letter to the American Consul at Martinique dated August 15th, says:—“This Island, I much fear, is ruined; and it will be impossible for it to recover.” Private letters estimate the number of lives lost between four and five thousand.

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
St. Pierre, Martinique, 18th August, 1831.

Sir—The British Government brig the “Duke of York,” has this moment arrived from Barbadoes, bringing the painful intelligence that that Island had been almost entirely destroyed by a hurricane on the 10th inst. Fortunately I have obtained a paper, which I now forward.—It however, gives but a poor idea of the damages and losses sustained, as appears from the memorandum on the back by a gentleman of high respectability. Private letters estimate the number of lives lost at between four and five thousand, and great fears are entertained least the affluvia from the dead bodies under the rains, (putrefaction having already commenced), may add disease to famine and want. Many of the inhabitants who have ever been accustomed to the luxuries of life are now without clothing or shelter. Referring you to the Newspaper, I have the honour to be, Sir, in haste, your ob’t serv’t

JOHN S. MIERCKEN.

To the Collector of any port in the United States.

The following is a description of the hurricane and its devastations, which we copy from the Gazette above mentioned:—

On Wednesday evening, the 10th August, about 7 o’clock the wind blew very fresh at North, the clouds began to collect in thick masses at N. E. passing away in scuds, as fast as they collected, with a rapidity of motion almost incredible. They continued to do so until about 9 o’clock, when the sky became bright, and a perfect calm succeeded. At about ten o’clock the same fatal night, the wind began to spring up, blowing very fresh from the S. W. shifting backwards and forwards from this point to N. W. and increasing in violence every instant, and continued till about 5 the following morning, (by which time the work of destruction had been completed,) when it shifted again to S. E. and blew exceedingly strong until about half past eight, when it somewhat abated in violence and gradually died away, leaving the whole Island one unvaried scene of desolation and distress. In Bridgetown there is scarcely a house which has escaped injury; hundreds have been fazed to the ground and many of their inhabitants buried under the ruins, others unroofed and partially thrown down so as to be completely untenable. Trees of immense size and strength were either uprooted by the roots or bereft of their branches. All the vessels in Carlisle’s Bay were driven from their moorings and thrown on shore. At the Out Ports in Speights, the Hills and Ostrin’s towns, every house has either been thrown down or rendered untenable; their inhabitants sharing the fate of the numberless victims who have been crushed to death. In the country, the whole face of nature is changed—on the plantations, almost without a single exception the buildings, mills, and negro houses, have been destroyed; and many of them have suffered materially in slaves and cattle. The provisions which had been hoisted, as well as the standing corn and canes in the fields, have been so completely destroyed as scarcely to leave a vestige behind—and to add to the heart rending picture, at this moment many of the estates are without a single article of food of any kind. No force of language can indeed convey an idea of the horror and distress every where observable throughout the Island, and whichever way the eye is turned, the head grows dim and the heart becomes faint at the saddening and sorrowful picture. Many of the opulent and respectable families, as well as those of the middling and poorer, by this melancholy catastrophe, have thus been driven out, destitute of a covering, many who the day before were surrounded by their families and comforts, have not where to lay their heads.

Up to this moment the number of killed has not been ascertained, nor all of the unfortunate creatures who have been inhaled in the fallen dwellings taken from beneath them. The interval of time between Thursday morning and the present, has been employed by the living in burying the dead. The bodies which have been discovered have been borne through the streets to their silent and narrow homes in coffins, trees, and whatever else could be obtained for them. Amidst other numberless distressing cases of this kind, it is our melancholy duty to notice the fate of Deputy Assistant Commissary General Flanner, who with his wife, five children, his niece and two servants, were all buried under the ruins of their dwellings on Wednesday night, from which they were not taken until the following morning; his unhappy wife and two of the children alone have survived. At St. Ann’s many of his Majesty’s troops have been killed and upwards 100 wounded by the falling of the barracks. The seat of Government, the Custom House, the Girls’ central School, (they boys’ school only partially damaged) and in fact most of the public buildings of the Island lie in masses of ruin. Several Speights’ boats returning from the leeward from this, were upset on their way, and almost every soul on board of them drowned; among whom we regret to say, were our fellow labourer the joint proprietor of this paper, Mr. J. Wooding and his brother, Mr. Thomas Wooding, who perished, with fifteen others belonging to the same boat, on the fatal night of Wednesday. We cannot conclude this appalling account without observing that of the many persons with whom we have conversed on the subject, and who experienced the great storm of 1780, all concur in the opinion that greater injury has been done on the island by the latter than the former; a circumstance which will more forcibly convey to the reader an idea of the violence of the storm on Wednesday night, which lasted eight hours only, when the duration of that of 1780 is supposed to have lasted 48 hours. The most remarkable phenomenon attending the storm of Thursday morning, was the sudden gust of wind, which instead of thunder invariably accompanied the vivid flashes of lightning, and

came with a force not to be withstood. Hollow subterranean noises were also heard, and some imagine we were also visited during the night with earthquakes; this, however, we do not vouch for, as we were not sensible of them.

We have hastily thrown together these few particulars amid the scenes of indescribable horror and confusion, and shall continue to furnish such additional ones as may reach us. The following is a list of the Vessels stranded in the bay:—barques Irelam and Aretusa; brigs Exchange, Quebec, Decagon, Mary, Keziah, Alliance, Heratio Nelson, Elre; brigantines Samuel Hinds and Herwine; Schooners Ark and Perseverance; mail boats Barbados and Montague.

Here ends the account in the Barbadoes paper; but the letter of the 15th says: the American brig Antoinette is on the beach with 200 puncheons of meal entirely lost.

ST. JOHN.—At the Monthly Meeting of the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of this city held last Wednesday evening, a Committee was appointed to collect information as to the number and value of Saw Mills, Lumber Wharves, and all erections and improvements connected with the manufacture of Timber and Lumber throughout the province, the number of persons employed about such establishments—the wages generally paid them—and all other matters connected with the general Trade of the Province. This information when obtained, will be forwarded to the Province Agents in London—that if an attempt should again be made to impose an increased duty on our Timber and Deals in the British market, they may be prepared with facts to assist them in opposing any such measure.—Courier.

On Thursday last, while Mr. William Laskey, Mate of the barque Alchymist was in the act of crossing the deck, he placed his foot upon one of the hatches, which suddenly slipping, he fell into the hold, struck his head and fractured his skull in such a manner that he died in about two hours. He was in the 29th year of his age, and bore an excellent character.

On Saturday the 27th ult. at the Hibernian settlement, a Coroner’s Inquest was held on view of the body of Patrick Charles Ferguson.—Verdict, the deceased perished in consequence of having lost his way in the woods. Mr. Ferguson on the 16th of April 1830, left Quaco to come through the woods to the Hibernian settlement, a distance of about eight miles and arrived within half a mile of his own house, where he perished. He was not missed until six weeks after his departure from Quaco, when diligent search was made for him; but he was not found until the 26th ult.

FREDERICTON.—His Excellency Major General Sir Archibald Campbell, G. C. B. having been appointed Lieutenant Governor of the Province of New Brunswick, arrived last night at Fredericton, and came this day to the Council Chamber, where his Commission being read, he took the usual oaths and assumed the Administration of the Government.

ORIGINAL.

No. 4.

FORESTS OF NEW-BRUNSWICK.

In my present communication I shall pursue the subject with which I closed my last, and in my next it is my intention to commence a description of the Forest Trees.

Large tracts of burnt wood-land now deform the Province, particularly this County, and in the course of a few years, they will be covered with an almost impenetrable thick growth of young trees: On the Tobique, in 1821, an extensive districts was devastated by fire; and the same year a considerable space on the eastern bank of the Etienne, at which time a large saw mill on Savoy’s river was consumed. But all former fires did inconsiderable damage, when put in competition with the consequences of those awful visitations which we experienced in 1825, not only as respects the loss of standing timber, but, which is of far greater importance, the destruction of property in buildings, goods, implements, and fences, of the wooden bridges on the highways, and still worse—of human life.

That year was distinguished for an extraordinary drought—no rain having fallen between the middle of June and the middle of October: the woods in most parishes were on fire, and great damage was done in the forest, on the highways, and on the clearances in different parts of the Province. In July a corn and a saw mill at Richibucto were consumed, and the woods were so extensively in flames, that travelling on the roads was attended with great danger. But the 7th October was the fatal day, on which, in the Book of Destiny, was traced the climax of our horror and dismay.

To enter into a full account of the occurrences of that day of doom, forms no part of my plan; and I shall therefore dismiss it for the subject of an abler pen, and confine myself to the description of the trajectory pursued by the devouring element.

Commencing in the County of Charlotte, on the left bank of the Maguaguadavic, embracing both sides of the Piskahagan, sweeping over the rocky heights to the sources of the South West branch of the Oromucto, and descending that river to near its confluence with the

St. John, the fire can be traced in a broad and dreary zone, extending in width on the right bank of the river towards the mountains bounding the Black Creek. Great destruction was made in the beautiful and flourishing settlements that adorn the intervalles on that branch and the creek, and among the more detached clearances on the deep and placid stream of the Oromucto, but without inflicting any of those painful bereavements with which the people of Miramichi were the same evening afflicted. The demon of destruction then leaped upon the town of Fredericton, where upwards of forty houses and stores were burned, but no lives were lost. The Government House, a building constructed of wood, ignited in the roof a few days previously, and notwithstanding the utmost and powerful exertions, it was totally destroyed. Conflagration then caught the woods about the sources of Burnt land Brook, soon extended to the South West River of Miramichi, and almost instantaneously spread from river to river, and swept with the speed of the whirlwind to the North West branch, and the whole intermediate forest was at the same instant, one tremendous flame. Urged by the wind, the North West River presented no obstacle to its irresistible course, but, borne on the wings of the hurricane, with an instantaneousness resembling a train of gunpowder, and with the hoarse roar of a volcano, in a few short minutes, the left shore of the harbour of Miramichi, with the banks of all its tributary rivers, was swept of the fair villages and buildings which lined them—as if those villages, and those buildings never had been. During a march so rapid, no animal existing in its path, had the least chance of escape, unless water in sufficient abundance was at hand, into which he could plunge, and occasionally submerge; and accordingly in the settlements which were watered by no rivers—or by rivers sufficiently large to afford safety—the greatest loss of human life was endured.

The settlement in rear of Douglastown, that on the Bartibogue, and another on the sources of the Napan, on the right shore of the harbour, were the great theatre of suffering, in consequence of the want of a watery refuge. The Bartibogue, it is true, is a considerable river, about sixty feet in average width, but as the volume of water poured through its bed, is only after heavy rains, too abundant to prevent its being fordable in almost any part of its course above the tide, in the autumn of 1825, it undoubtedly supplied a quantity too scarce, in most places, to cover the human body. Below the mouth of the Bartibogue, and a line drawn due North to the Bay Chaleurs, inconsiderable loss was sustained, either in erections, and property of the settlers, or in the natural productions of the soil. Westward of that line, to the Nipisiquid on the north, and the sources of the North West River on the West, all the buildings, goods, and fences of man, including New-castle and Douglastown, were consumed; and the whole of the standing timber (the exceptions being too inconsiderable for notice) was left in its former position, to form a vast amphitheatre of blocked, dead, and useless forest trees—daily falling, encumbering the land, and rendering it almost impassable for man or beast.

Having said so much on the effects of fire on the forest lands of this country, in order to counteract the alarm and apprehension which an emigrant may thence reasonably entertain, it will be necessary for me to add, that when fire has once passed through the woods, it will rage there no more, until the land be recovered with a new growth. The terrors and disasters which we have experienced in no lenient degree, constitute for the present times, the greatest source of security and happiness to new comers.

The most surprising phenomenon attending this rapid succession of wood is, that where a large tract of land, comprising many hundred square miles, has been entirely desolated, in a few years—some times in the short period of two years—young trees will shoot up at so vast a distance from living ones of the same species, that it seems impossible for the winds to waft their seeds so far:—we are almost tempted to believe, that trees are indigenous to this soil, and will spring up without seminal origin. The kind of growth which often succeeds the hard woods, is, spruce, fir, hemlock, and a very thick growth of a bastard species of maple, frequently nothing but wild cherry, sometimes poplar, and often white birch;—yet, before the fire occurred, neither a poplar, nor a cherry tree might have been seen