

than five hundred millions of millions of times in a single second. That it is by such movements communicated to the nerves of our eyes that we see. Nay, more, that it is the difference in the frequency of their recurrence which affects us with the sense of the diversity of color. That for instance in acquiring the sensation of redness, our eyes are effected four hundred and eighty two millions of millions of times; of yellowness, five hundred and forty two millions of millions of times; and of violet, seven hundred and seven millions of millions of times per second. Do not such things sound more like the ravings of madmen than the sober conclusions of people in their waking senses? They are, nevertheless, conclusions to which any one may most certainly arrive, who will only be at the trouble of examining the chain of reasoning by which they have been obtained.—Herschel.

The Politician.

THE BRITISH PRESS.

From the London Times, April 7.
THE LAST WRECK.

It is no slight penalty to pay for the advantages of our insular position that hardly a week passes in which fresh families are not added to the long list of those who mourn for brave hearts lost at sea. Those who die wrecked, die young too; sailors, soldiers, passengers, men generally in the glow of life and health. News from the Cape brings the terrible intelligence that so have perished four hundred and thirty eight of our countrymen in the wreck of the Birkenhead. A catastrophe like this cannot easily be made real to the understanding of us dwellers on the land. A steam vessel transporting soldiers to the Kaffir war (itself calamity enough), having six hundred and thirty souls on board, is swiftly traversing a smooth sea on a fine night. The captain to save time runs her near the shore. The fate of the Pegasus, of the Great Liverpool, of the Orion, has been warning insufficient against a perpetual recurrence of the same disaster. On the ominously named Danger Point, about fifteen miles from Port d'Urban, the misguided ship strikes upon a pinnacle rock, distant less than two miles from the line of shore. The rock breaks through the engine room and rends the bottom of the vessel. In twenty minutes the Birkenhead is literally rent in two; and one half falling into deep water on one side, the other half upon the other side of the rock, they sank, and there is nothing visible above the water line but the maintopmast and maintopsail yard, floating spars, two crowded boats, and the struggles of our drowning countrymen. Countrymen we are proud to call them, for they died true heroes. The long annals of shipwreck furnish no picture more impressive than that which is conveyed to us of this large body of men laboring calmly in the face of death. As soon as the vessel struck the captain gave orders to the officers in command of the troops, which were with the greatest order and regularity immediately carried out. The men fell into places, were told off into relief, and passed to various parts where their service was needed as quietly and coolly as if on the parade ground. There were some women on board and many children. The first thing done was to secure their safety. The detailed account of the way the brave fellows effected this, and found time to deliver every one, themselves finally dying with grand tranquility, is not to be read without the deepest emotion. As in the case of the Amazon, the officers stood to the vessel to the very last. Every officer except the surgeon was on board when she finally sunk. All had calmly awaited death in the performance of their duty to provide help as they could to those committed to their care. 'Down we all went together,' says a survivor of the dreadful scene, 'and until the vessel totally disappeared there was not a cry or murmur from soldiers or sailors.' We turn from the indescribable horror to the final effort, when there was no ship upon the sea, to swim through the thick sea weed, under which sharks habitually lurk. Some of the survivors describe their companions in this last struggle suddenly disappearing beneath the waters with loud shrieks. There is great sadness in these terrible events. Nearly all have been avoidable with common care.

Here, as in the cases before, the wreck was caused by a manifest want of prudence; here, as in all cases before, the boats were found useless in time of need. The tackling of one was broken, a bolt had rusted in another, and so forth. Here also, as in a recent case, one minor officer (it was a midshipman on that occasion, now it is a surgeon) has achieved notoriety by taking care of himself. Survivors of the wreck state that between a hundred and a hundred and fifty or more of the men who clung to the drift wood of the wreck might have been preserved, if Mr Culhane had not picked up a boat to save himself and some eight companions, without caring to return it after their own safety had been effected. Mr Culhane thinks by such a reproach he is hardly dealt with, and we have his defence before us. Being afraid to smash his boat upon the shore, he at first chased a cutter. Having missed that he rode all the way to Cape Town for help. His case therefore is that after pulling a share of about fifty miles, and riding about a hundred and ten miles across the country, he is sorry to hear that it has been said he left the boats. His object in trotting to Cape Town, he

tells the commodore, was that he might be able to send a steamer to the wreck, and that such also was the object of the other eight of the boats' crew. That is, his shipmates were to struggle in the water, floating on drift wood, knocked on the head by spars, bitten by sharks, or sinking from sheer exhaustion, though some hundred and fifty of them might have been rescued by half-dozens at a time with the gig of which this doctor had deprived them. And these men were in their death struggle, while the zealous doctor was trotting 100 miles across the country, to inform the commodore that there were Englishmen a-drowning, and that it would be well to send a steamer out.

Communications.

Dear Pierce,

I had thought my correspondence through your columns would end with the Legislative Session, but the letter of Joseph Read, Esq., M. P. P. for Gloucester, published in your paper of the 1st instant, requires a word or two from me. I do not desire to enter into any controversy, and while I am indifferent as to Mr Read's opinion of "Fides," or his "insidious insinuation" that he knows him, I am not disposed to let the public remain in doubt as to the correctness of the information given by me during the winter. As a Correspondent I have invariably given the facts, and when I have thrown out any observations of my own, it has been done in such a way as to mark distinctly the line between narrative and comment. It might be convenient to individuals that less information should be given through the Gleaner, but it is of general importance that the Northern constituencies should know the political course and conduct of their Representatives. And now for Mr Read's letter.

"Fides" stated that when the Government committed the Bill to amend the Act of Incorporation of the European and North American Railway Company, "Gordon was absent at St. John, and Read and Stiles out of the way, and that there was no excuse for the two latter." This Mr Read calls a 'bare and insidious statement,' but he expressly admits that he was "out of the way," and merely asserts that he had an excuse. I shall now state the facts and circumstances upon which "Fides" made this statement.—Mr Read will not then have to complain that the statement is "bare," and the public can judge if it is "insidious."

When the Bill was committed by the Government, their strength on the question was doubtful, and it was well understood by some of the Northern members that the loss of this Bill would defeat the unjust scheme for the Quebec and Halifax Railway. As the debate proceeded, the position of the Government became more desperate, and the opposers began to count heads, when Mr Read was missing. One of the Northern members went in search of and found him in one of the committee rooms—told him the importance of defeating the Bill, and requested him to come down and vote. He replied, "very well." When the debate was about closing, and Mr Read was still absent, the same member again went for but could not find him, and the Bill passed in Committee. Notice was then given that the Bill would be opposed on the third reading. This took place on the following morning, and while it was being read, Mr Read was in his place, reading a newspaper, but when the Speaker rose to put the question, a few minutes after, Mr Read's chair was vacant. "Fides" did not say that Mr Read had shrunk from his duty, but thought, and yet thinks him called upon to explain the urgent public business he was transacting in the committee room, when asked to come down and vote—how that business required him to leave at that particular time, and what important news he found in the daily papers the following morning, which prevented his remaining in his seat five minutes to vote on this Bill; and it will then be for his constituents to determine whether that business or the Quebec and Halifax Railway was to them more important.

"Fides" had no desire to prejudice Mr Read in any way, but thinks when the particulars are known, the public will consider it merciful in him to have given the "bare statement" in the first instance. Indeed, "Fides" refrained from hinting that Mr Read held an office under the Government, or could be influenced by them to avoid voting against a Bill, which, if lost, would involve the Government in its defeat; and lest Mr Read might suffer by comparison, he refrained from stating that on this very Bill we had (in Mr Barberie's) one noble instance of a Representative risking his office rather than sacrifice the interests of his constituents.

If Mr Read wished to show that "Fides's" information was not always correct, he has been unfortunate in selecting the instance to prove it; and if, by his refer-

ence to the 5th and 6th paragraphs of the Reply to the Governor's Speech, he means to insinuate that he knows "Fides," he has been equally unfortunate in proof. He says "Fides" recorded his name in favor of them. If he will look again he will find that 'tis he who is in the habit of publishing mis-statements: no names were recorded on either of these paragraphs. The only paragraph in which names were taken was the 8th, and on this all the Northern members voted among the nays except Cutler.

Mr Read is perfectly justified in calling the attention of the public to any vote, speech or act of a Representative, and with this "Fides" has nothing to do. It is presumed that those gentlemen, when attacked, will be prepared to give as able and satisfactory an explanation of their conduct as he has given in this instance.

"Fides" would, however, recommend them, that it may, in some cases, be better that a "bare insinuation" should pass unheeded. Explanations and particulars do not always mend the matter when called for.

Yours, &c.,

FIDES.

Editor's Department.

MIRAMICHI:

CHATHAM, MONDAY MAY 10, 1852.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS.

The attention of the public has been so much occupied of late with the Railway, the Attorney General, and other matters, that they have not had leisure to turn their attention to the highly important subject of Municipal Corporations, the introduction or rejection of which is shortly to be tested in this county.

The present law ordains that before these Institutions can be introduced into any County of the Province, a Public Meeting must be held, of which three months' notice must be given by the High Sheriff, at which meeting two-thirds of the rate payers then present, must declare in favor of their adoption.

This meeting is to be held at the County Court House, in Newcastle, on Wednesday, the 2nd day of June next, and we call upon every person who has signed the requisition, and every friend of self-government, to be at their post on that day, and record their votes in favor of a measure which has conferred such important benefits on the people of those countries which have adopted them, and it is natural to infer will also promote our prosperity and advancement. If they do not attend, we are apprehensive the result of the meeting will be similar to the one recently held in Charlotte County.

We believe that the merits of the system are not as generally known as they deserve to be; and we think it would be advisable for some one well acquainted with the subject to bring it more fully under the notice of the public, in order to counteract the under-current which we understand is at work, and the misrepresentations which have been set afloat by a few officials, who fear the effect such a change would have on their own emoluments, when their appointment might come under the control of the people.

We would advise those gentlemen, if they are really opposed to the introduction of Municipal Corporations on principle, not to descend to misrepresent the merits of a system which has been the foundation of the prosperity of all countries that have adopted it, and will no doubt be equally beneficial to ours.

We deem it wrong in any person occupying a situation which brings him in contact with the people, to use the power and influence which his position gives him, to retard, by misrepresentation, the advancement of his country, merely through fear of its influences upon himself. Such influences are now at work in Northumberland.

If such persons continue to oppose this measure, let them do it without mis-stating facts, and suppressing important features, as may best suit their purpose, and we will not complain, although such persons should not interfere at all—certainly not to slander, misrepresent, and vilify.

There are, in our opinion, we are sorry to say, many highly objectionable provisions in the law, and many things omitted that should be provided for—but the only way to remedy these defects is to adopt the measure, and if the law is found defective in any particular part, and the people discover that they require more extended privileges than it bestows on them, they can petition the Legislature on the subject, and the complaints will be remedied. We have no doubt that in a few years, after the people get acquainted with their working, and

the necessary alterations are made, that the Press generally throughout the Province, will have the same tale to tell as our contemporaries in Canada, that the system works most admirably, and that the people would not forego them for any consideration.

We copy below from the St. Andrews Standard, a full report of the proceedings of the meeting recently held in Charlotte County, and we hope the people of Northumberland will profit by the information it conveys.

The inhabitants of Carleton County have acted more sensibly, and adopted the measure; and it will be seen by the articles copied from the Sentinel, that the people have already acquired one important privilege by the act, the power to appoint their own Bye Road Commissioners.

The people frequently, and very justly complain, of the extravagance of the members of the Assembly in appropriating the Provincial Revenue. The only remedy for this evil is to bestow on the Government the power to Initiate the Money Grants.—But this cannot be conceded with any degree of safety, and the representatives of the people in the Assembly will not feel disposed to give them such a privilege, until the Counties generally throughout the Province have adopted Municipal Corporations.

We have thrown out these remarks with a view to call the attention of the public to the subject, as the time is not distant when they will be called upon to decide on the matter.

The following are the extracts alluded to above:

On Thursday last, 22nd instant, a meeting of the householders paying rates upon property in the County, took place at the Court House, pursuant to notice, for the purpose of deciding whether they would accept of a municipal corporation. The High Sheriff explained the object of the meeting, and read some of the principal provisions of the Municipal Act; after which he put the question 'Do you accept the Charter?' The yeas and nays being numerous, a poll was at once demanded. The Sheriff decided that none but householders, paying rates, were entitled to vote, and that with a view to accommodate all who wished to vote, he had appointed as clerk Mr Robert Ker, who would record their names in an adjoining room. The presiding officer vacated the chair, and William Ker, Esq., was appointed thereto, when P. Clinch, Esq., addressed the meeting at some length in opposition to accepting the Charter. He was followed by Dr. Thompson, M. P. P. on the same side. John Wilson and L. Donaldson, Esqs., followed, in favor of the charter. George J. Thompson, Esq., next engaged the attention of the meeting, and opposed the measure, Messrs. F. A. Bacock and James Boyd followed, strongly in favor of Municipal authorities. George D. Street, Esq., then spoke against the adoption of the act, followed by Mr Wm. Smith, in favor of it; and succeeded by B. R. Fitzgerald, M. P. P., against the adoption of the measure at the present time. Mr H. E. Seelye closed the addresses by a neat speech in favor of incorporating the County. We took notes of such speeches as we could hear, but are unable to publish them this week. Notwithstanding all the arguments which those gentlemen opposed to the measure brought to bear against it, we are satisfied that the Act would work well in this County, and that the adoption of the principle has only been delayed and not rejected. Had the weather not been so stormy, and the freshets so high on our rivers, many intelligent persons from the upper Parishes would have been present, who are decidedly in favor of incorporating the County, and carried the measure by an overwhelming majority, even beyond the two-thirds vote. We understand that Captain Robinson, M. P. P., was detained from the meeting in consequence of a severe domestic affliction—but for that, he would have expressed his opinions. At the close of the Poll two hundred and eighty five persons had voted, of whom one hundred and sixty nine were in favor of adopting the charter, and one hundred and sixteen opposed to it; consequently it was lost by twenty one—two thirds of two hundred and eighty-five, the whole number of voters, that is one hundred and ninety, being necessary to constitute a majority.—St. Andrews Standard, April 28.

Municipal Corporations in Charlotte.—We learn from Charlotte County that the same deception and misrepresentations are practiced there to defeat the Municipal Act that were employed here; they even go so far as to represent the people of Carleton as being dissatisfied with the Act even before coming into operation; that if it is carried into effect no money will be granted by the Legislature; that before we gave the Act a trial we petitioned for various amendments, &c. Several other hob-goblin stories are set afloat to deter the people from voting for this measure, but if the men of Charlotte will take the trouble to think for themselves, the efforts of interested persons to dupe them will be of no avail. We did petition the Legislature for certain amendments to the Act, but it was not because we were dissatisfied with its principles; we wished it to go a little further. The House made the required alterations, and the Hon. Messrs Hill and Brown from Charlotte voted for them in the Council, and with a little more help the Bill would have been perfected; but the opponents of the measure were rather too